

**+FAB PHABLET: THE NEW SAMSUNG GALAXY NOTE 4**

# Stuff

GADGETS / APPS / GEAR

SINGAPORE

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**SMARTPHONE  
SUPERTEST**

**CROWNING  
THE NEW KING**

**iPHONE VS LG  
VS MOTOROLA VS  
SAMSUNG VS SONY**



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6 Plus

**+ AIR  
TO THE  
THRONE:  
NEXT  
GEN iPad**

# APPLE VS ANDROID

**SYSTEM  
SHOWDOWN**

**WHICH OS  
IS THE BEST?**

G3

Z3

Alpha

Moto X



**+THE GOLF GTI WILL GO FAR**

**+ CHRISTMAS GEEK GIFT GUIDE**



Lenovo® recommends Windows.

# LENOVO YOGA

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THE NEW  
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HOLD



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**THOSE**  
**WHO DO.**



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# LG G3<sup>LTE</sup>

## SIMPLE IS THE NEW SMART

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reddot award 2014  
best of the best



### Optional Accessories\*



LG G Watch<sup>R</sup>



LG TONE INFINIM™



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# WELCOME



This month, my table's been home to an iPhone 6, iPhone 6 Plus, iPad Air 2, iPad Mini 3, Google Nexus 5, and Google Nexus 9, sometimes all at the same time.

It's perfect timing, given this month we're trying to answer two of the biggest questions in all of tech: who comes up tops in the ongoing battle for best mobile operating system? And what's the best smartphone money can buy right now? To see the fruits of our labours, turn to our cover story pitting **iOS 8 vs Android 4.4** on p46, and the iPhone 6 against four of Android's top contenders in our **Superphone Supertest** on p76. Trust us, you'll be surprised who takes home the title of best smartphone in the world, and it's good to see a familiar name make a comeback. Since we're on the subject of picking winners, it's also time for our **Stuff Readers' Choice Awards** to crown the best gadgets of 2014, so flip on over to p54 to find out how you can have your say. December also means the season of giving is also upon us once again, with Christmas just around the corner. To see the geekiest gifts you can buy for your loved ones (or yourself), our **Stuff Christmas Gift Guide** on p111 is here to help you out. Feliz Navidad! 🎄



Melvin Tang, Editor / [melvin.tang@haymarket.com](mailto:melvin.tang@haymarket.com) / @melvinstuff

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Stuff Singapore MCI (P) 053/11/2014  
is published by Haymarket Media Asia  
Pte. Ltd. a subsidiary of Haymarket Media  
Group Ltd.

Stuff is published across Asia in: China,  
India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar,  
Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and  
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*1/32000 sec expands  
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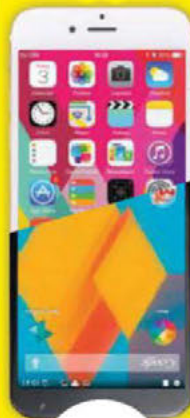


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pebble



## Pebble Steel

-  **NOTIFICATIONS** Get texts and important notifications directly on your wrist.
-  **WATERPROOF** At the pool on the beach, or in the shower. Your pebble is good down to 5ATM.
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### OUR PRICES

Prices in Hot Stuff are RRP's. Prices in features, tests and Top 10s are the best we could find from a reputable online retailer at the time of going to print.

H

O

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S

T

HOT  
FOUR  
#1**THINNER, FASTER,  
GOLDER****Apple iPad Air 2,  
iPad Mini 3**

Like a very thin, triple-decker toasted sandwich that it would be dangerous to eat, the Air 2's Retina display, touch sensor and glass have been pressed into a single layer. Thanks to this high-tech sandwich-making ('optical bonding', if you like using the right words for things), the Air 2 is, at just 6.1mm thick, slender enough to cut a real sandwich with. But we wouldn't, because smearing it with mayonnaise is not the best way to show off the power of its new A8X chip or the improved rear camera, which now snaps 8MP stills, 1080p video and 240fps slo-mo. Also, a stray gherkin might interfere with Touch ID, which has arrived on both the Air 2 and the Mini 3, and a spatter of breadcrumbs won't show off their gold finishes (grey and silver are available if you're not as bling-ting as we are). Mmm... gold.

**Ashotas**... a 30,000W Breville  
from \$688, from \$548 / [apple.com/sg](http://apple.com/sg)

**TELL ME MORE****1 Appiness**

The A8X chip gives the Air 2 more power – Apple claims around 40–50% – giving it the grunt for richer games and apps.

**2 Snappiness**

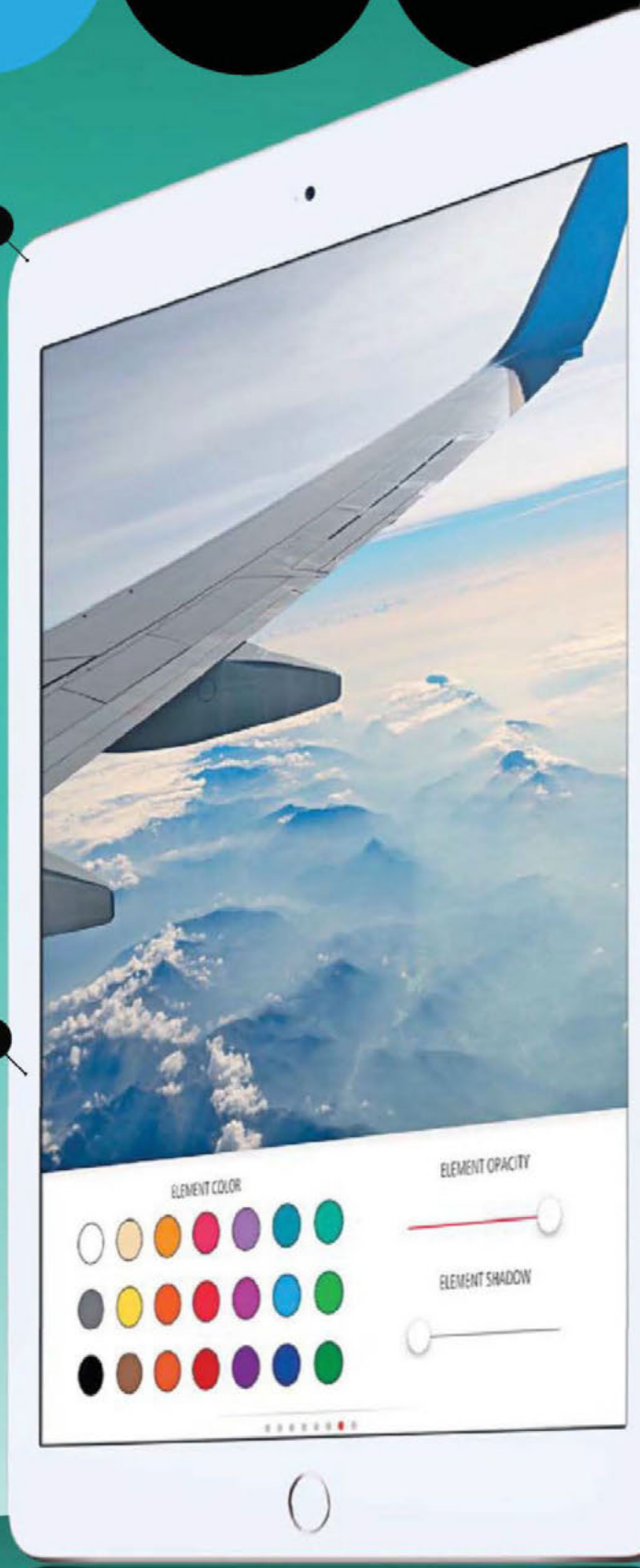
How we mock people taking tablet pics... but now, with the 8MP sensor plus slo-mo and burst modes, it's becoming a thing.

**3 Tappiness**

Touch ID means more than secure login: paying is now achieved with a simple prod. Save us a space in debtors' prison!

2

1



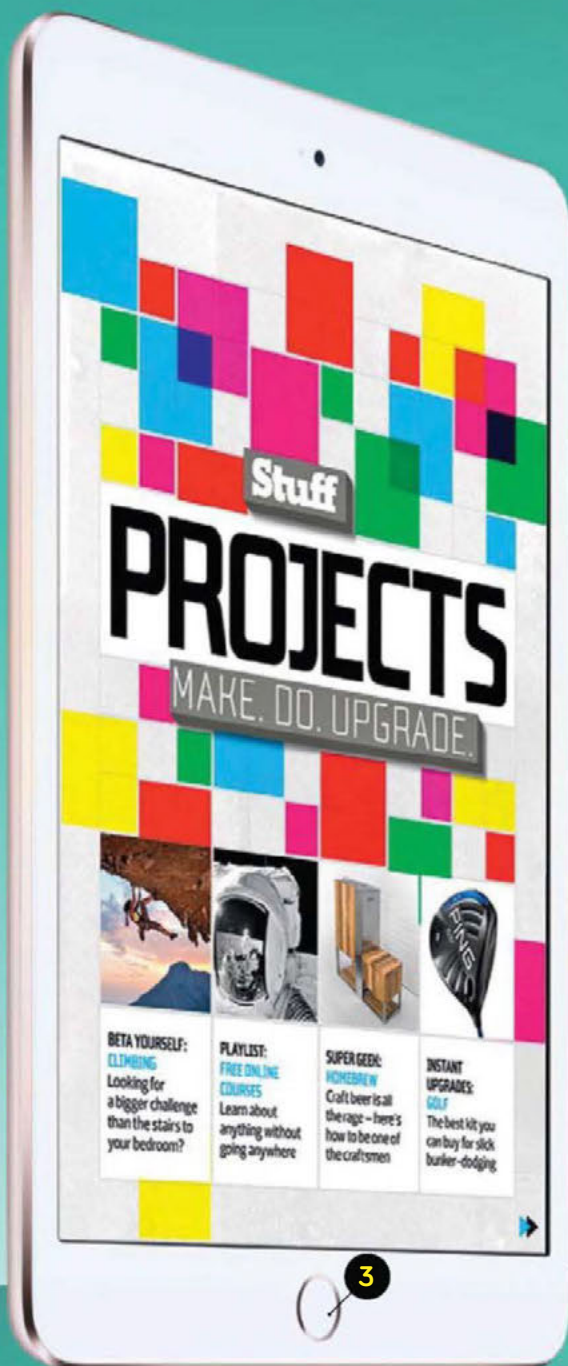


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21 PAGES  
OF THE BIGGEST  
STORIES FROM  
PLANET TECH



iMAC 5K



## NURSE, THE SCREEN!

Apple iMac with Retina 5K display

Apple might act like it's too cool to wear its specs in public, but deep down it's as hot for a big number as the rest of us. Especially when that number is as big as the absolutely enormous 14.7 million pixels that are squeezed into the new iMac – making it, at 5120x2880, the world's highest-resolution display. That means you can be working on a 4K video in Final Cut, viewing it pixel-for-pixel, and still have room for the toolbars and whatnot around the outside. The design itself remains the same, with that thin edge and the USB 3.0/Thunderbolt ports around the back and Core i5 or i7 processors, 32GB of RAM and an up-speccable AMD R9 M290X graphics card doing the grunt-work. As is usual for gorgeous new Macs, the price is also a very big number.

Ashot as... melting pixels  
from \$3388 / [apple.com/sg](http://apple.com/sg)



HOT  
FOUR  
#2

## THE EYES HAVE IT

### HTC RE Camera, Desire Eye

It used to be Nokia that obsessed over unusual cameras, but HTC has well and truly taken that crown. First up we have the periscope-shaped RE action-cam: it knows when it's been picked up and takes either 16MP photos or 1080p/30 videos with, respectively, a press or hold of a button. It's waterproof and shockproof, you can stick it to a variety of things and control it with your phone. The Desire Eye, meanwhile, actually has two big, beautiful eyes: both front and back cameras have 13MP sensors, which can do all sorts of tricks. Perhaps the most impressive takes place in video calls, when the Eye's fixed camera can pan and zoom, as if operated by a tiny demon, by changing which part of the sensor it uses. It's also highly specced for a Desire, with a Snapdragon 801 chip and 5.2in, 1080p screen — and, like the RE cam, it's waterproof.

**Ashotas...** a submarine selfie  
**Stba, USS200 (\$255) / [htc.com/sea](http://htc.com/sea)**





HOT  
FOUR  
#3THE MOTO X JUST  
GOT REALLY NEXY

## Google Nexus 6

Phabletters of the world, charge your glasses and join us in a toast to the newest member of our (already ample) family. The Nexus 6, a 6in phone that now sits between the Nexus 5 and the Nexus 9 tablet, arrived with an absolute Apple-anathematic absence of hype and hyperbole. And yet its numbers are something to yelp about: this is a 493ppi, 2560x1440-screened Motorola-made phone (Moto X styling cues abound) with a 2.7GHz Snapdragon 805 and 3GB of RAM. But tastiest of all the stats, perhaps, is that it'll be running the new version of Android, now fully revealed as Android 5.0 Lollipop. The only info we're lacking is the price, but Nexuses are usually affordable – this could make the Samsung Note 4 and iPhone 6 Plus decidedly nervous.

As hot as... a chilli-flavoured lollipop  
US\$650 (\$840) / [google.com/nexus](http://google.com/nexus)

## NEXUS 9

## Nine looks fine

An HTC-built Android 5.0 tablet with 2048x1536 pixels – the same as an iPad Air 2 but in 4:3 aspect ratio, not 16:9. Hmm...

## The nitty gritty

It's half a gnat's whisker under 8mm thick, 436g and powered by a vroom-a-licious 64-bit Nvidia Tegra K1 chip.

## Apples and pears

Those specs put it right on par with the iPad Air 2 – a tiny bit bulkier, but less expensive.



## NEXUS PLAYER

## Chrome as you are

Remember how you wished your Chromecast was more like an Amazon Fire TV? Well, Google was listening.

## Talking pictures

The small, simple remote is for bringing Google's superb voice control to your TV. Ask it for movies and they appear.

## Up sticks

The controller is an extra US\$40 (\$50), but it'll let you increase your high score on all your Android games.



HOT  
FOUR  
#4SMALL SPEAKER,  
BIG NAMEBang & Olufsen  
BeoPlay A2

Cast yourself into the past, all the way to 2005... Wow, what are *those* things?...

Now, imagine that, back then, a hi-fi manufacturer like Bang & Olufsen announced a battery-powered portable speaker. Audiophiles everywhere would be having kittens! Back to now — *pop!* — and it's still enough to raise an eyebrow (the audiophile equivalent of an eyebrow) or two. Fortunately, the 180W-power A2 is gorgeous enough to hold its logo, and from our initial listens, has more than enough mouth to go with its fetching trousers. It may be manbag-sized, but streaming to it from AptX Bluetooth results in a really surprisingly room-filling sound that emerges from both sides — true 360°, in B&O parlance — so you can put it where you like. Even smarter is its patented new Adaptive Power Management system, which somehow enables the A2 to party for up to 24 hours, with a recharge taking just three.

**Ashotas...** a Slingbox, back in 2005  
**E300 (\$615) / [bang-olufsen.com](http://bang-olufsen.com)**





  
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# LUNOKHOD-2

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# LENOVO INVENTS THE STAYTAINMENT DEVICE

## Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2 Pro

\$1199 / [lenovo.com/sg](http://lenovo.com/sg)



The projector can fire films onto your living room wall at up to 50 inches across

**It's a whopper with a screen the size of a doormat, but within its spine lies an even bigger screen...**

### Does one really need to carry around a 13.3-inch tablet?

One needn't stretch the seams of one's man-satchel, no. This gargantuan tablet is not designed to go a-wandering. Instead it exists only to answer a question raised by the statistics gleaned through Lenovo's focus groups — led by one Ashton Kutcher if the videos are to be believed, though there may be a little PR involved. That statistic is

that 80% of people don't ever take their Lenovo tablet outside the house, and that question is: "Why bother making them super-portable, then?" And thus, the Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2 Pro is born. It has a 13.3in 2560x1440 screen, with 9600mAh of battery built in to its cylindrical edge, and also a projector.

### Wait, what? A projector?

Indeed! When Ashton Kutcher sets out to make a home entertainment tablet, he wastes not his time dancing with the dachshund, as they say. For times when 13.3in just isn't enough, the pico projector that

fires out of the side of the tablet can provide an image as big as 50in. Getting it correctly aligned might be a mite tricky, but the 180° kickstand will help.

That kickstand isn't just a kickstand, mind — it's a kickstand with a hole in it. It allows you to hang the device from, say, a kitchen cupboard-knob so you can consume digicontent while you cook up some biocontent for dinner. It also stops the screen (or cupboard) obscuring the 5W subwoofer that forms the .1 part of a JBL 2.1 speaker system. Make no mistake, this hefty homebound device is intended to be a video-loving tablet *par excellence*.



### ALTERNATIVELY...

#### Lenovo Yoga 3 Pro

A watch-strap hinge makes the Yoga 3 Pro the world's thinnest Windows convertible tabtop. Specs and battery life claims look pretty decent — look out for a full review soon.



## Big on sound

## RAZER LEVIATHAN

It's ironic that it's named after such a massive creature, because the Razer Leviathan is really quite compact. It'll save you a ton of space too, because it's your PC, TV, and wireless speaker all in one device. A powerful soundbar with 5.1 virtual surround sound and Dolby technology, this beast's also got a wide range of connectivity such as Bluetooth 4.0 aptX for crystal clear streaming.

\$280 / [razerzone.com](http://razerzone.com)



## All about that bass

## SENNHEISER URBANITE

Since you can't be at the clubs all the time, maybe it's time to bring the clubs to you. The new Urbanite headphones don't just fit in with your finest Friday night digs, they'll deliver fantastic club-quality bass with Sennheiser's signature clarity and quality too. And yes, that includes treble, because music without it would sound terrible, no matter what Meghan Trainor says. Also available in an XL version for a supersized experience.

from \$269 / [sennheiserasia.com](http://sennheiserasia.com)



## Bright tunes

## BOSE SOUNDLINK COLOUR

Have you ever thought "I like this speaker because it's brightly coloured and sporty looking?" Then you really need to get your priorities straight, because whether it sounds good or not should be top of your list. Luckily, the lightweight yet sturdy Bose SoundLink Colour covers all those bases, with excellent audio quality and a wide range of colour options to suit your tastes.

\$219 / [bose.com](http://bose.com)





# grand theft auto

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**M18**

PS4

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### SCALES SHOOTS AND LEAVES

Researchers at Carnegie Mellon University's Biorobotics Lab are encouraging their modular snake robot to climb trees and wiggle through deep sand in the same manner as a real snake. They'd say it's for the emergency services and hard-to-reach engineering tasks. They'd point out that it's wired and not battery-powered, so not truly autonomous. They would say all this, we expect, but we just tried to call, and they didn't answer...





### DYSON FAN KILLS BACTERIA

This isn't yet another Dyson Air Multiplier fan. It's based on similar technology, but it's a new humidifier and it keeps you hydrated and the air you breathe bacteria-free. It uses UV light to cleanse the water inside, killing 99.9% of germs and what not in three minutes – apparently the only humidifier to do this.



### B&W'S BLUETOOTH SPEAKER GOES TRANSPARENT

Bowers & Wilkins, aka B&W, has created its first Bluetooth speaker, and it's one that has got some see-through bits that everybody loves. Its honeycomb structure is said to minimise cabinet resonance, giving this handbag-sized speaker clean sound right up to its higher volume levels.



### LEICA'S M EDITION 60 CAMERA IS SCREENLESS

It's a digital camera, but not as we know it. For starters, there's no screen. For another, it's a special limited edition model released to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the first true M, the Leica M3.

### Digital dreadnought ASUS ROG G751

Portability in a laptop has different meaning when it comes to gamers. As long as it can be put into a bag, it'll probably pass as portable. That's because a top priority for serious gamers is power, and the 5.3kg ROG G751 delivers. It truly reflects the F-22 Raptor it's designed after too, packing an advanced arsenal such as quad-core i7 processors, 4GB graphics cards, and support for 4K external displays to take down the competition.

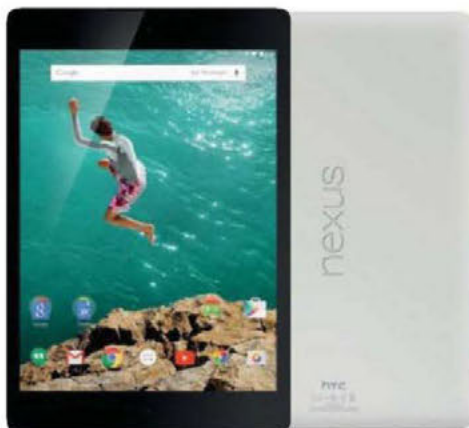
[\\$1ba / asus.com/sg](#)



### Nine inch nailed GOOGLE NEXUS 9

We've just been introduced to Android Lollipop, the latest version of Google's mobile OS, and our first taste of it will come in tablet form. It's a sugar pill we're sure isn't a placebo either, given how sleek, powerful, and beautifully built the Nexus 9 by HTC is. A 9-incher to fit between its rivals from Apple, the device packs a 2K display, a 64-bit processor, and brings much of HTC's design and innovation to the forefront. It's undoubtedly the best Android tablet ever.

[US\\$400 \(\\$515\) / htc.com/sea](#)



### The NX generation LEXUS NX HYBRID

The Japanese carmaker looks like it's got another winning SUV on its hands with the sporty Lexus NX Hybrid. Driven by a combined system power of 194bhp from its 2.5-litre petrol engine and electric motor, it's got serious performance to match some impressive eco-friendly credentials too – fuel consumption is listed as an amazing 17.5km/L. As if that wasn't enough, the car even has a Qi Wireless Charger built into the centre console. High Expectations Asian Father would be proud.

[\\$247,000 \(with COE\) / lexus.com.sg](#)







# REIGN

Your body wants to be active.  
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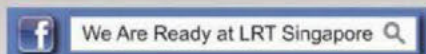


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**You can't handle the stats!**

## GARMIN FORERUNNER 920XT

You know in science-fiction novels, when a character plugs something into their cortex slot and gasps as the yottabytes of data flood into their mainbrain? Well, that, except with fitness numbers. The latest Garmin triathlon watch tracks an amazing amount of data about your swim, your run and your cycle via accelerometer, GPS and altimeter as well as wireless ANT connection to bike-mounted sensors. It'll also connect to your smartphone for live tracking, email and message notifications. What's more, it can do it all for 24hrs in GPS mode, or 40hrs in extended UltraTrac mode. Gasp, indeed.

from US\$450 (\$575) / [garmin.com](http://garmin.com)



**Bigger film, better pictures?**

## LOMO LC-A 120

The LC-A 120 isn't like other Lomography cameras. Yeah, we know it's analogue, plasticky, light weight and bound to strike a chord with lovers of all things retro, but there's one key difference: it uses 120mm medium format film. That means images with crisper detail and a shallower depth of field than standard 35mm cameras will deliver – handy if you're planning on blowing your shots up to poster size. If you like that idea, best get your skates on: only 500 are being manufactured in the first production run.

\$598 / [lomography.sg](http://lomography.sg)

**Parrots show off new plumage**

## PARROT ZIK 2.0

If we lived in LaLaLand, where elephants never forget and have really great hearing on account of those big ears, we'd employ those lumbering wrinkleskins to do our headphone reviews. And we could talk to them about these new Parrot Zik headphones, and they'd remember the old ones and how good they were. But here in the really real, elephants are actually ill-suited to personal audio journalism, so you're stuck with our impressions instead. The new versions still have designer Philippe Starck consulting, and they come in lighter, more leathery and zanier-coloured form. There's a better DAC on board and the app that lets you customise what you're hearing has been upgraded. The noise cancellation and touch-sensitive music controls remain. One trumpet for good, two trumpets for awesome...

US\$400 (\$510) / [parrot.com](http://parrot.com)







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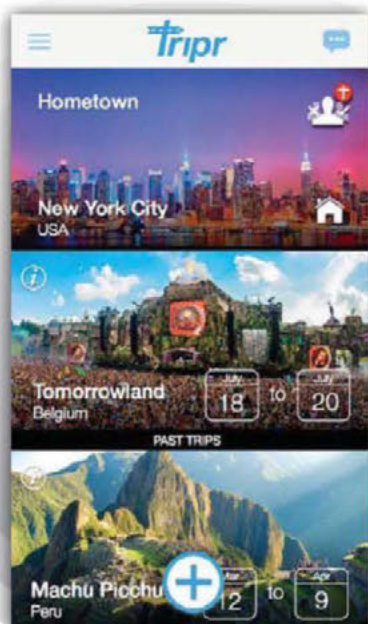


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[www.msi.com](http://www.msi.com)

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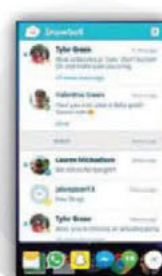
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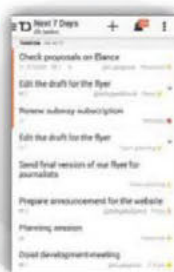
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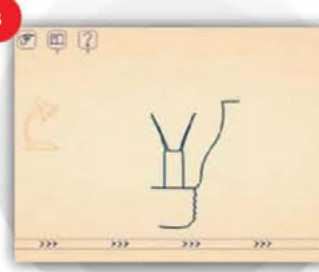
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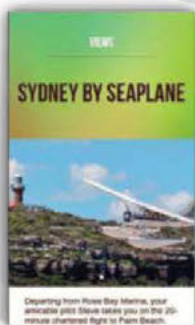
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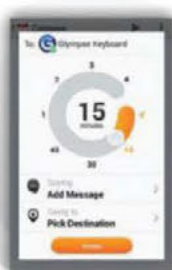
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2



3



6



9



### 1 Trip

**\$free / iOS**

We've met travel journalists who use Tinder in order to get guides to show them around unknown cities. But we prefer this above-board way of meeting either fellow travellers or locals. With absolutely no suggestion of sexy times.

### 2 Seasonal Cities

**\$free / iOS**

"...After lunch you can head down to the riverside for a go in a punt or a cooling ice cream." Good travel advice, except it's winter and the river is frozen. Seasonal Cities is an 11-city travel guide that changes, you guessed it, with the seasons.

### 3 Glympse Keyboard

**\$free / Android**

If you use location-sharing app Glympse, this is as useful as an extra thumb: it adds a Glympse shortcut to your keyboard, so you can drop your location into a text/WhatsApp with one keypress. Plus there's no need to have gloves specially made.

### 4 Only Connect

**\$3.98 / Android, iOS**

University Challenge and Mastermind can make one feel under-educated, but only this app gives you the impression you're in another dimension where the very fundamentals of knowledge are incompatible with you.

### 5 Todoist

**\$free / Android, iOS, Windows**

Some make do with scribbled lists on a scrap of paper. Others need multi-platform, multimedia to-do list apps – and Todoist has just been updated. Its 'Karma' rewards scheme now works on mobile and Mac OS. Ah, sweet rewards.

### 6 Reckless Racing 3

**\$5.98 / iOS**

A level of bodily transformation is required in order to get the most from Reckless Racing games. The poor App Store reviews for this new game are from people unprepared to turn into red-eyed hunchbacks with quivering thumbs. Fools!

### 7 Snowball

**\$free / Android**

Messages and notifications stream continuously onto your phone like punters into an Apple Store to use the internet. Snowball consolidates all these into one chronological list, ping you back to Hangouts, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.

### 8 Find the Line

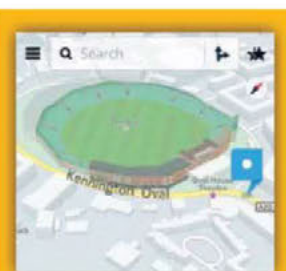
**\$free / iOS**

We wonder if whimsical, nicely designed puzzle games will fulfil us until the end of our lives. This one has you scrolling through seemingly randomish line shapes until you spot a picture. Kinda relaxing, apart from the full-screen video ads.

### 9 SideChef

**\$free / iOS**

There comes a point in life where you stop dropping your phone into nightclub toilets and start dropping it into cake mix. This app claims to reduce this risk by reading out the instructions and automatically setting timers for individual steps.



## APP SPOTLIGHT HERE BETA

**\$free / Android**

When Microsoft bought Nokia, it forgot to buy its superb maps app, Here. And we're glad, because that means Here is now free to make its way to Android – Samsung Galaxy devices only, at the moment – and eventually iOS. Here combines the nice looks of Apple maps with the actually-works functionality of Google Maps, with the extra bonus that you can download whole countries for offline navigation.





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## THE EPICNESS OF E-SPORTS

GAMING TOURNAMENTS HAVE PROVEN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN PROMOTING TEAM WORK, LIFE SKILLS AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, SPORTSMANSHIP



**Tein Hee Seow**  
online editor asia

You've stayed up late into the night, listening to commentators giving detailed accounts of the epic match as your favourite team faces their toughest foe yet. You breathe a sigh of relief and pump your fist in the air when they emerge victorious.

Sounds like a scene straight out of this year's FIFA World Cup. Nope. It's what you would have seen during The International, an annual electronics sports tournament hosted by Valve.

### It's all in the game

Such gaming tournaments are the very pillars of today's esports. Sadly, the biggest challenge faced by aspiring esportsmen isn't the lack of training facilities or competitions to hone their skills. It's the misconception that esports has no future for those on the cusp of entering and meeting the demands of society. Where careers are concerned, friends and family of these young and passionate gamers view esports as just a game.

This is far from the truth. The International's game of choice, Dota 2, is merely one of many that represents all the good that comes from esports. Like any sports teams, esports competitors work just as hard, training and developing strategies based on their rivals' play. As far as values are concerned, patience, respect

and above all, sportsmanship, are imparted within esports teams.

### Making a career out of it

Career progression? There's plenty. Like football teams, it's common for outstanding team players to become captains. Eventually, there's a progression towards becoming managers who handle the business aspect of team management and sponsorship.

Then, there's the prospect of getting a portion of a huge payout, like the US\$10 million prize for The International 2014, which happens to be the largest prize pool ever for a gaming tournament.

Support from the industry isn't lacking either. Gaming peripheral maker Razer has seen its investment pay off in the form of RZR Xian, who emerged victorious at last year's Street Fighter Evolution Championship Series (Evo). Taiwanese gaming laptop maker MSI is also just as enthusiastic, sponsoring a wide variety of esports teams including League of Legends experts, Saigon Fantastic Five.

### Leveling up e-sports

Short of recognising esports in the Olympics, the scene is much more vibrant compared to a

decade ago. But like everything, more can be done to promote the value of esports. GameStart2014 is a fine example. Besides being a gaming convention where gamers get to experience new games, it's also a platform for gamers to meet and even challenge esports personalities like RZR Xian and MCZ Daigo Umehara during the two-day event.

So the next time someone isn't supportive of your decision, point them here and show them how far esports has evolved. If anything, now's the best time for you to take the leap of faith and be the next epic champion of Starcraft II, Dota2 or League of Legends.





# STYLUSES

A quiver of digital quills to suit your electro-artistic identity

## 1 Lynktec TruGlide Pro Stylus & Artist Paintbrush Tip

You're Georges Seurat, master of pointillism – building an image from lots of dainty daubs. You don't like it that the brush tip's bristles only make a line, unless you use a fancy app, but like the feel anyway.

**US\$35 (\$45) / [lynktec.com](http://lynktec.com)**

## 2 Equil Smartpen 2

You're Danielle Steel. Despite your prolific output, you find a laptop far too clinical a tool on which to write romance. But your despairing publishers have asked you to use this pen, with a Bluetooth receiver that sits at the top of the paper turning words directly into money.

**US\$150 (\$190) / [myequil.com](http://myequil.com)**

## 3 STM Tracer Deluxe

You're Batman. The Tracer Deluxe sits in your utility belt, bristling with functions: black and red pens, squidgy stylus end, a SIM ejector, Phillips and Torx screwdrivers. It doesn't fire tracer bullets, but it's affordable enough to be thrown at enemies in a pinch.

**AUD\$30 (\$35) / [stmbags.com.au](http://stmbags.com.au)**

## 4 Pencil by 53

You're Ernest Hemingway. You like to sit in cafés with your iPad Mini in a notebook-esque cover and scribble with your pencil-esque stylus. You draw oblique shapes and write words that amuse you. When a waitress comes, you snap it shut and wink conspiratorially.

**US\$60 (\$75) / [fiftythree.com/pencil](http://fiftythree.com/pencil)**

## 5 Wacom Bamboo Stylus Fineline

You're Jony Ive. Your bread and butter is user interfaces and that means fine, sharp edges rather than blurry faux-shadows. You use Wacom's new Fineline stylus, with its 1024 levels of sensitivity. It is, naturally, iOS-compatible.

**US\$60 (\$75) / [wacom.sg](http://wacom.sg)**





60 years in focus

## LEICA M EDITION 60

Leica's legendary M series of rangefinder cameras has just hit the ripe old age of 60, and the company is celebrating – not with a cake and some balloons but by launching the insanely expensive and insanely desirable M Edition 60. It's a stainless steel digital camera designed by Audi and limited to just 600 models – oh, and it doesn't even have a screen on the back. The idea is to engender some back-to-basics photography – the sort your grandpappy did 60 years ago.

£12,000 (\$24,555) / [leica-store.sg](http://leica-store.sg)

No brain scrambling required

## DUCATI SCRAMBLER

There's a wee devil on your shoulder. She's using her evil powers of persuasion to entice you into buying this motorbike – currently, this involves making engine noises and humming the theme tune to *The Great Escape*. Were you able to get her to calm down, she might explain that this new Ducati – despite that exotic name – is not wildly expensive, nor dangerously powerful, nor tricky to handle. There are cheaper bikes to get started on, certainly, but just look at it. Air-cooled, 800cc, on-road, off-road, all yours. You look to the angel on your other shoulder for balance – but forget it, he's already gone to queue for a test ride.

[Stba/ducati.com.sg](http://Stba/ducati.com.sg)



# START MENU

The month's best concepts, start-ups, crowdfunded projects and plain crazy ideas



Wedged shut

## HAVEN LOCK

US\$270 (\$345) / [havenlock.com](http://havenlock.com)

Smart door locks to prevent break-ins, such as August or Goji, have thus far been designed to replace the deadlock in your door. Straight thinking, but installing one does mean messing up your door. The Haven guys have a different solution: a Bluetooth and Wi-Fi controlled wedge, slim but very strong, that raises and lowers at your command from a mobile device, jamming the bottom of your door shut. Neat.

Status

Seeking funding (Kickstarter)



Feline fancy

## AXENT WEAR CAT-EAR HEADPHONES

US\$115 (\$145) / [axentwear.com](http://axentwear.com)

Occasionally something arrives that answers such an obvious question, it's hard to believe how we got along without them. Tablets might be one, remote control vehicle air-conditioning another. And now this: headphones and speakers in one glorious feline-inspired headband. As we went to press, Axent had raised 332% of its US\$250k goal.

Status

Funded (Indiegogo)



No photos, please

## NOPE

US\$5 (\$6) (pack of two) / [bungajungle.com](http://bungajungle.com)

It's a dark world out there, chock-full of pervy geeks just waiting for a chance to hack into your computer, activate your uncovered webcam and illicitly take pictures of you – well, it is according to the makers of the delightfully named Nope, anyway. Their solution: a small, magnetic and professional-looking cover for your front-facing camera, in two sizes to suit either big desktops or wee tablets.

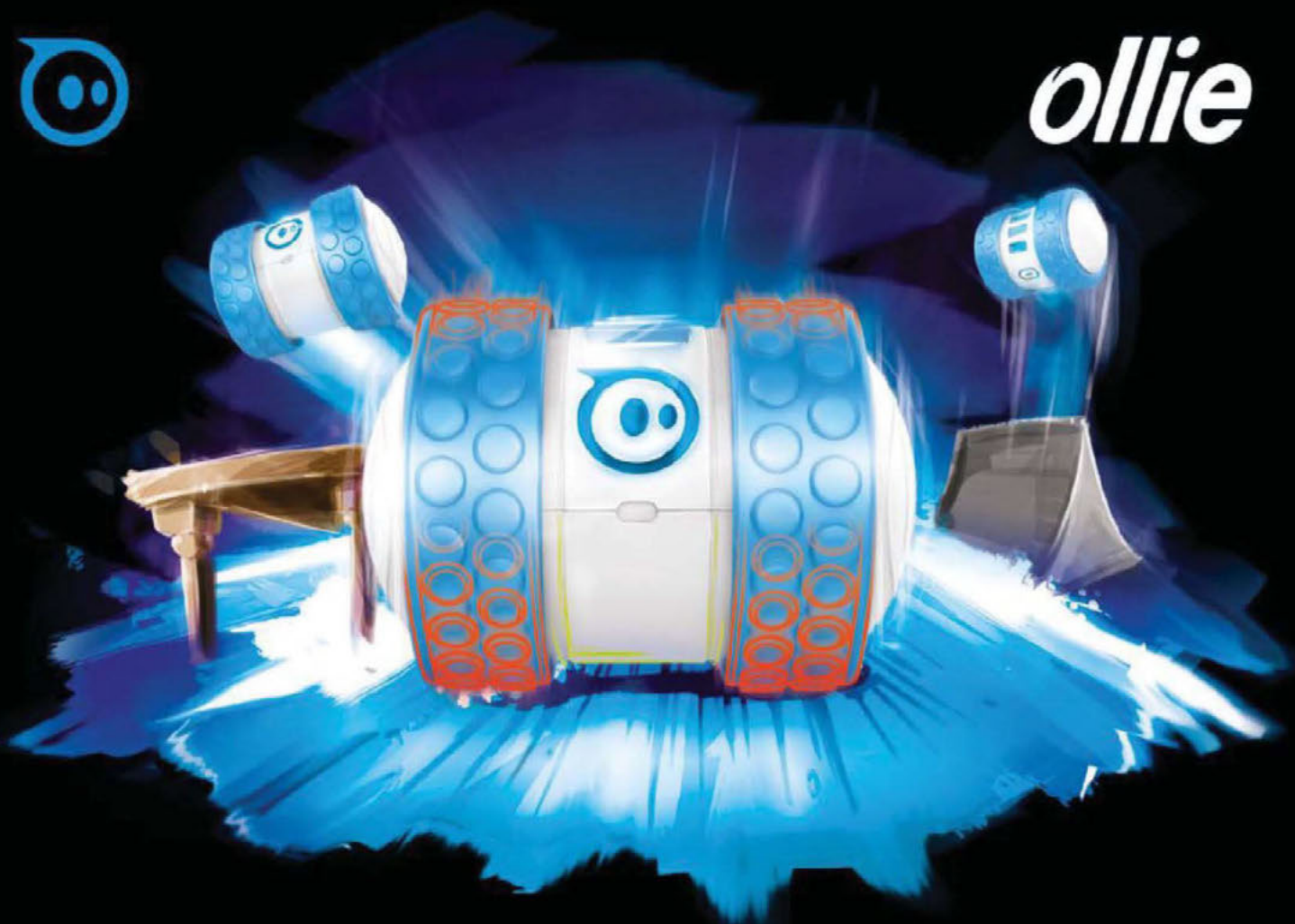
Status

Funded (Kickstarter)





**ollie**



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## FIRST PLAY FAR CRY 4 PS4, Xbox One, PC

If Kyrat were a real place, *Far Cry 4* would give its tourist board a heart attack. If it's not crackpot dictator Pagan Min and his army of henchmen trying to kill you, it's the local wildlife; but having played three hours of the single-player campaign and an hour of co-op, there's plenty to write home about.

Kyrat is huge, so it's handy there are new vehicles including a hovercraft and gyrocopter to get around (don't fly too high, though, or it'll splutter and conk out); plus, the pickups and hatchbacks now have cruise

control to make bullet-spraying drive-bys more effective.

While Kyrat itself is fictional, its inspiration isn't, with snowy Himalayan peaks emerging from dense vegetation. At lower altitudes it doesn't feel hugely different to the Pacific-style islands of *Far Cry 3*, but that's no bad thing.

It's easy to lose track of time just exploring the landscape on foot, in a 4x4, or stampeding into an enemy outpost on the back of Dumbo's big brother, a tactic that's likely to result in a call from the WWF if you try it on

one of the game's new heavily fortified elite strongholds.

And elephants aren't the only new animals. Dive-bombing birds of prey mean you have to keep an eye on the skies, plus there are macaques, honey badgers, bees and more, many of which can be harvested to upgrade your gear (although, sadly, you can't craft a bee-skin hat – that'd take ages).

It makes for a game that feels wilder and more alive than *FC3*, with more to do on the way to liberating Kyrat. Pack your bags. We'll see you there.





## 2-UP FIFA BEATERS?



VS

## FOOTBALL MANAGER 2015

PC, Mac

If you're more Mourinho than Messi, you'll want to ditch the studs and prove yourself from the dugout instead. The world's most addictive database returns this month and now allows you to choose which type of gaffer you're going to be. In other words, will you take a Pulis-style boots-on approach, or preach your 'philosophy' from the stands? You can also take coaching badges to boost your skills, and the game's match engine has also been overhauled. Time to release your social life on a free transfer (again).

## PES 2015

PS4, Xbox One, PC

FIFA might've raked in another haul of five-star reviews this year but does it have a World Cup winner on its cover? No, it does not. Aside from Bayern Munich's Mario Götze, PES's next-gen debut also promises more responsive controls, more realistic defending and more recognisable team and player characteristics, so Barcelona will try to pass teams to death and Liverpool will forget to defend. It still looks like the interface was designed in somebody's lunch break, but then it wouldn't be PES without a dollop of menu confusion, would it?



## WHAT TO PLAY ON... PLAYSTATION TV



## GOD OF WAR COLLECTION

Combining the first (and best) two *God Of War* games in one downloadable package, these Vita versions of the PS2's classic mythological slash-'em-ups still stand the test of time. The remastering job looks a little dated these days, but both games' huge *Shadow Of The Colossus*-style boss battles are just as epic as before.



## GTA: VICE CITY STORIES

With *Grand Theft Auto V* hitting next-gen consoles this month, you'll probably be too pre-occupied in Los Santos to bother with *Vice City Stories*, but it's well worth a trip back to '80s Miami when you've finished with Michael, Trevor and Franklin — if only for the mission involving Phil Collins and his absolute #LAD of a tune, *In The Air Tonight*.



## HOTLINE MIAMI

Compatible with PS4, PS3 and Vita, *Hotline Miami*'s top-down ultraviolence can now be carried pretty much wherever you go — even if it's just to the bedroom TV. The ultra-difficult shooter might look old-fashioned but it's one of the most addictive games we've played in years. For more indie games, check out our feature on p101.



## INCOMING

## NOVEMBER

- CALL OF DUTY: ADVANCED WARFARE
- GRAND THEFT AUTO V (NEXT-GEN)
- PROJECT CARS
- ASSASSIN'S CREED: UNITY

## DECEMBER

- THE CREW
- LARA CROFT & THE TEMPLE OF OSIRIS

## JANUARY

- DYING LIGHT



## KAWASAKI H2R

Stba / [kawasaki.co.uk](http://kawasaki.co.uk)



### Jings! It's got wings.

Aye, it does. Like a child setting fire to a greenhouse full of fireworks, Kawasaki has created an expensive, beautiful and potentially dangerous call for attention. Perhaps it's from watching rivals Honda and Yamaha getting all the attention in MotoGP — which Kawasaki pulled out of to focus on its World Superbike and MXGP motocross campaigns. It's definitely got our attention now.

### Why does it have wings?

The wings are there for stability (as on F1 cars), and they're needed because this is the world's most powerful production motorbike. A 998cc four-cylinder engine is a solid base for a sportsbike, but Kawasaki has supercharged the H2R into a near-300bhp beast that leaves the previous 'most powerful' badge holder, BMW's S1000RR, whimpering in its tracks.

### How fast does it go?

With 300bhp pushing something that weighs a few hundred kilos, ask not how fast it goes but how long you might be able to stay on. Kawasaki has been quiet about the electronics package, but it'll certainly have some level of traction control and probably active suspension. Top speed is a bit of a moot point in bikes, but it'll likely do over 322km/h.

### Whatever. I am going to look like a king cruising this up the high street.

Not a king, but a crim. It's not road-legal (no lights or number plate, see) but a track-day special, costing around \$100k. Good news, though: a road-ready H2 will follow. It'll still have a supercharger, although with somewhat less than 300bhp to shout about, but it might be priced somewhere nearer our end of the market.

THIS IS THE  
WORLD'S MOST  
POWERFUL  
PRODUCTION  
MOTORBIKE



### MYSTERIOUS MECHANISM HUBLOT OCEANOGRAPHIC EXO4000

\$42,000 / [hublot.com](http://hublot.com)

The Antikythera mechanism has puzzled archaeologists for decades, with engineering and technical expertise far beyond anything the ancient civilization that made it should have been capable of. Hublot's been an ardent supporter of efforts to uncover its secrets, and the Oceanographic EXO4000 dive watch is their latest endeavour. A tribute to the team of scientists working on the project, the watch doesn't just withstand depths down to an astonishing 4000 metres, it's a true-blue fine Swiss watch as well.



### EYE OF THE TIGER ULYSSE NARDIN HOURSTRIKER TIGER

from \$173,800 / [ulysses-nardin.com](http://ulysses-nardin.com)

Since lions aren't native to this part of the world, it's highly unlikely Sang Nila Utama really saw one when he discovered Singapore all those years ago. A much better bet would be a tiger, which is one of the most majestic and powerful creatures ever to roam Asian jungles. The Hourstriker Tiger is named after the two exquisitely crafted handmade 18-karat gold tiger Jaquemarts (bellstrikers) that move powered by a rare automatic movement, testament to Ulysse Nardin's expertise in high horology.



### THE KNIGHT'S WATCH RJ-ROMAIN JEROME BATMAN-DNA

\$22,200 / [romainjerome.ch](http://romainjerome.ch)

The same watchmaker that gave us the world's first Space Invaders fine watch has just further enamoured itself to wealthy geeks around the globe. The Batman-DNA is the first in a planned series of Super Hero timepieces by RJ-Romain Jerome and the Warner Brothers, and sports the iconic Bat-Signal in glow-in-the-dark SuperLuminova as its centrepiece. There are other subtle nods to the Dark Knight of course, but the best part about the Batman-DNA is that wearing it won't just make you feel like the caped crusader, but billionaire playboy Bruce Wayne as well. Christian Bale would be proud.

**Canon**

Delighting You Always

# MAKE IT SNAPPY

Canon's EOS 7D Mark II flagship APS-C DSLR comes with impressive professional performance

## ■ Sensitive to your needs

At the heart of the EOS 7D Mark II is a newly-designed 20.2MP CMOS sensor that delivers excellent images filled with rich detail and crystal clarity. This cutting-edge sensor was also built for outstanding low-light sensitivity, and is capable of going up to ISO 16,000 with minimal noise and optimum performance.

## ■ Two of a kind

Powered by dual DIGIC 6 Image Processors, the camera is also capable of advanced image processing and extreme quickness. Almost every correction can be done in real-time, even with the camera shooting up to 1090 JPEG, 31 RAW, and 19 RAW and JPEG shots in a single burst. You'll never miss a single moment while shooting.

## ■ Rapid fire

There's no point having a camera capable of shooting so quickly without shutter performance to match. That's why Canon perfected a new ultra-durable shutter and mirror mechanism that can achieve amazing continuous shooting speeds of up to 10fps, making the EOS 7D Mark II every sports photographer's dream. It can go slow too, and go nearly completely silent up to 4fps.

## ■ Locked on target

With Canon's responsive 65 all cross-type Auto Focus, new intelligent Tracking and Recognition, and AI Servo AF III systems in place, the EOS 7D Mark II has an AF area and speed that exceeds most APS-C sensor cameras. It's much more accurate, tracks fast-moving subjects with ease, and can even focus in extremely dark situations of EV -3.





EOS  
DIGITAL

Canon

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1/2000 Sec • f/2.8 • ISO 320 • EF300mm f/2.8L IS II USM

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## EOS 7D Mark II

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EOS 7D Mark II (Body):	\$2,499

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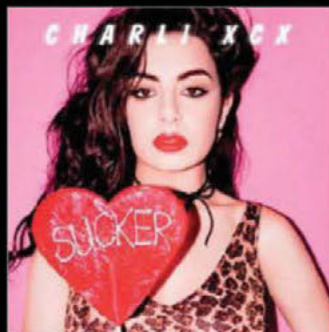




## WU-TANG CLAN

### A Better Tomorrow

In the making since it was first announced in 2011, the new Wu-Tang album is finally official. Although there were many a dispute about artistic direction, the clan has managed to set aside their differences and create an album. As for how it'll turn out, we'll have to wait and listen. Watch out for the collaborations with Cher, on not one song, but two.



## CHARLIXCX

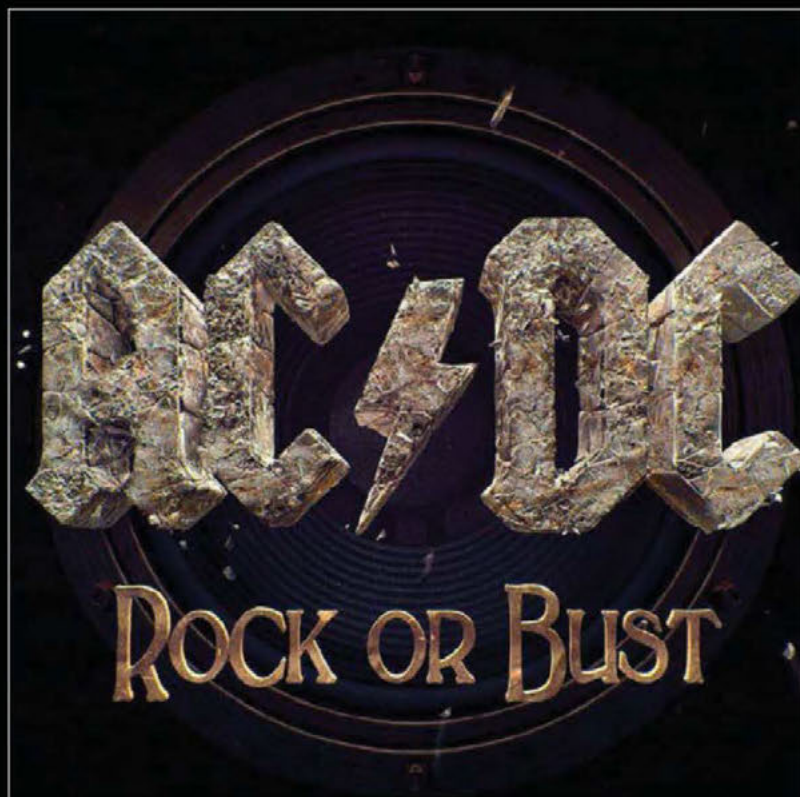
### Sucker

Inspired by punk bands like Weezer, The Hives and The Ramones, *Sucker* is meant to be an album of empowerment for the ladies who listen to it. The English singer-songwriter worked with members of Weezer and Vampire Weekend on her sophomore effort. And you would in fact have already heard of it, given *Boom Clap*'s radio success.

## AC/DC

### Rock or Bust

Listen up, AC/DC fans, their latest album will have all new tunes, their freshest since *Black Ice* in 2008. Originally supposed to be named *Man Down* to mark the departure of rhythm guitarist Malcolm Young, the idea was later chucked as it was thought to be too negative. On the positive side, fans will get 11 brand new songs to rock out to.



## TAKE THAT

### III

Although this album might be less two members – Jason Orange and Robbie Williams, the band's seventh album will still sound very much them – sappy and feel-good. Just take a listen to their first single *These Days* and let its upbeat melody transport you right back to the good old days when boybands ruled the charts.



## YUNG LEAN

### Unknown Memory

Don't be mistaken, this isn't a new Hong Kong artist, Yung Lean is in fact Swedish rapper Jonatan Leandoer Håstad. Yes, Sweden might not be known for its quality of rap music, but give the man a chance and embrace his debut album. He has after all been featured in magazines' music-acts-to-look-out-for lists. Not too shabby.



# IT ENDS HERE



LIAM NEESON  
**TAK3N**

IN CINEMAS JANUARY 8 2015



RATING TO BE ADVISED TakenMovie.com #TAK3NSG







18  
DEC

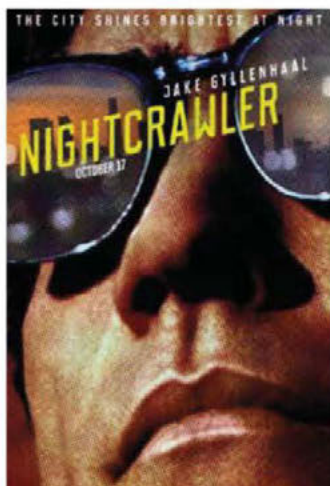
## THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES

The trilogy climaxes in the most incredible battle, in case you haven't already guessed from the title, since *Return of the King*. Sauron pits his orcs against the company of dwarves and their allies while the dragon Smaug helpfully rains hellfire upon the land. Might be a while before Peter Jackson comes up with another Middle Earth–based trilogy so best catch this one while you still can.

## NIGHTCRAWLER

Nope, not the Marvel Comics superhero, but even better than that. It might be a little difficult to recognise him but that's a thinned-down Jake Gyllenhaal. He plays Lou Bloom, a hapless young man who unwittingly finds himself in the middle of a situation way bigger than himself when he sets up his own freelance crime journalism gig.

4  
DEC



## EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS

Directed by blockbuster creator Ridley Scott, you can expect nothing short of gripping theatrics in this biblical epic. Based on the story of Moses (played by Christian Bale) freeing the slaves and leading them out of Egypt, it isn't just a story of a human battle, but a supernatural fight between good and evil. Brace yourself.

11  
DEC

## INTO THE WOODS

Starring Johnny Depp, Emily Blunt and Meryl Streep amongst others, the film puts a twist on the familiar fairy tales you're used to by exploring more of them. To break a witch's curse, the lead characters, a baker and his wife, must venture into the woods to find the ingredients necessary. You can only guess who, and what, they end up meeting along the way...

25  
DEC



## NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: SECRET OF THE TOMB

The final Night at the Museum has Ben Stiller reprising his role as security guard. However this time, he hits the road with his supposedly immobile friends from the museum. Their mission? To keep the magic in The Tablet of Ahkmenrah, and them, alive. It's also one of Robin Williams' last films as he returns as Theodore Roosevelt.

25  
DEC



# GROOMING

It's Christmas, the perfect season to splurge on gifts for people (yourself included). Here are some ideas for last minute shopping



## FOR HIM

### PHILIPS SHAVER S9111/12 \$389

This wet/dry electric shaver is equipped with V-Track precision blades to give a close yet comfortable shave. Multi-directional flexibility means you'll be able to get at every hair without having to knot yourself into a pretzel in the process.

### KIEHL'S FIT FOR A KING \$40

This gift pack includes some of the favourites from Kiehl's Facial Fuel line of products – the Energizing Moisture Treatment, Face Wash and Tonic for a complete cleansing routine to keep you fresh-faced for holiday photos.

### KENNETH COLE BLACK FOR MEN SET \$100

The suave woody fragrance carries top notes of ginger, rounded out by middle notes of nutmeg and grounded in base notes of amber. Layer on this scent in this set of EDT Spray, After shave Balm and Deodorant stick. Also includes a travel-sized EDT spray for touch ups on the go.

## FOR HER

### ASTALIFT MOISTURIZING & LIFTING SET \$128

Everything you need to retain the youthfulness of your skin is in here: from the Jelly Aquarysta concentrate to a moisturising mask and even two bottles of Collagen 10000 drinks. Work on your skin from inside out.

### LANEIGE SPARKLING PARTY MAKEUP PALETTE \$45

Comprising of two glittery nail polishes, an eyeshadow palette that will take you from day gathering to night parties, and two lip tints all wrapped up in a pretty package, this is the perfect practical holiday gift.

### BRAUN FACE \$99

This portable multi-tasking device not only cleanses your face, it also epilates it to get rid of any fine facial hairs that could trap dirt. Just switch tool heads to get the precise cleaning or epilating process you want.



## FOR BOTH



### SULWHASOO SIGNATURE EYE SET

\$326

As the year draws to an end, it's a good time to set new resolutions. One of which should be to take care of the skin around your eyes as they reveal your age the easiest. This set will keep your age a secret with products ranging from Concentrated Ginseng Renewing Eye Cream for improving blood circulation to Essential Balancing Water for hydration.



### LUSH CHRISTMAS BATHTIME FAVOURITES

\$105

If there's one single product that Lush is loved for, it'd be their bath bombs. This box consisting of 10 different popular and limited edition items is just the thing to put under the Christmas tree. Save the fun fizzy balls for a special staycation, or just a relaxing night in.



### ORIGINS MASK MARVELS

\$78

If it's balanced healthy skin you're after, this trio will do the job for you. The Out of Trouble 10 minute mask will quickly sooth any skin woes, while the Drink Up Intensive overnight mask deeply hydrates and Clear Improvement active charcoal mask cleans out your pores for overall skin improvement.

# IMAKATSU SINGAPORE

## THE PERFECT SPOT TO QUELL YOUR TONKATSU CRAVING

The Star Vista 1 Vista Exchange Green #01-17  
Singapore 138617  
[www.ophd.co.jp/sg/imakatsu](http://www.ophd.co.jp/sg/imakatsu)  
Tel: 6694 6148

Imakatsu is a new joint that popped up in the halls of Star Vista, an airy oasis of light wood.

Stepping inside the unassuming storefront, you'll be greeted by the same banner that hangs in their Roppongi and Ginza outlets for a little taste of authenticity. But the real deal lies in the taste and the fact that they have two Japanese chefs from the original stores helming the stoves for quality control in its first outlet outside of Japan.

Quality is of utmost importance to the folks at Imakatsu – meats are never frozen, sauces are made from scratch and key ingredients like rice and even eggs are imported from Japan. Upon ordering your main course, you're first served with an appetiser of shredded cabbage that you're supposed to eat with the tangy and creamy sauce on the table. The cabbage comes freeflow to act as a sponge in your stomach to soak up the oil in your tonkatsu main. Not that you really need it, as everything we tried was light and non-greasy.

The Chicken Cutlet Zen (\$14.80) might have been made of breast meat, but it tasted like prime fillet, retaining its juiciness instead of drying out into a tough chewy strip of chicken. Lightly battered, the chicken cutlet was non-greasy and had the perfect textural proportion of crunch to bite. The Pork Loin Cutlet Zen (\$16.80) was another thing of beauty, crisply tender. Served with mustard on the side, you can also choose to dip it in the salt (from Okinawa) provided or the slightly sweet and sour tonkatsu sauce on the table, but honestly, it's good enough to be eaten on its own. The quality of the food speaks volumes about the chefs' culinary skills. We hear that they use a specially controlled frying method – slowly increasing the temperature as they're deep frying to maintain the moisture within the meats. All Zen sets come with homemade pickles, rice and miso soup to fill you up.

On the dessert menu, the seasonal ice cream and sorbet flavours are changed weekly. When we were there, there were peach and apple flavours for both so you always get served the best of what's available. If sweets aren't the way you choose to finish a meal, you can kick back with a range of Japanese alcohol including Suntory Premium Malt on tap to smoky Hibiki whisky.



### STUFF TO TRY

#### Deep Fried Scallop Zen \$18.80

Fresh scallops lightly breaded and served atop a bed of Japanese rice with pickles and miso soup

#### Deep Fried Prawn Curry \$24.80

Prawn served with a thick Japanese curry made from seven different spices

#### Piyo Piyo Minced Meat Cutlet Zen

**\$18.80** The ever popular onsen tamago wrapped in a layer of minced pork and deep fried

#### Seasonal Sorbet/Ice Cream \$4.80

Fresh fruit flavours depending on what's in peak quality

**OPENING HOURS** Mon – Sun: 11:30 am – 10:00 pm

**STUFF SAYS** ONE OF THE BEST TONKATSU SPECIALISTS IN SINGAPORE, GO GET A TASTE BEFORE EVERYONE ELSE PICKS UP ON THIS DELICIOUS SECRET



**WHAT HI-FI?**  
**AWARDS 2014**

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

**Multi-room systems**

Best multi-room system £500+

**Bluesound**

**BLUESOUND**

HiFi for a wireless generation



The new multi-room wireless streaming system from Bluesound offers high-resolution 24-bit playback. There are five components in the Bluesound range, available in gloss black or gloss white, which can be controlled using iOS or Android apps on a smartphone or tablet. Prices start from S\$649.

**Visit our showroom for a demo and receive a special gift when you purchase any Bluesound device.**

\*Offer is valid till January 2015 and is subjected to availability.

**NODE** Hi-Res Wireless Music Streamer  
**POWERNODE** Hi-Res Wireless Music Streamer / Amplifier  
**VAULT** Hi-Res Music Server / CD Ripper  
**PULSE** Hi-Res Wireless Speaker System  
**DUO** 2.1 Speaker System



## NEW ERA NEW KING

NAD'S ICONIC 3020 AMP REBORN FOR  
THE NEW GENERATION MUSIC LOVERS



*"If the D 3020 represents the future of hi-fi, count us in."*  
- What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision

*"It makes you wonder what more is possible."*  
- HiFidelity

CONNECT ALL YOUR DIGITAL DEVICES



### NAD D 3020 Hybrid Digital Amplifier

Stream music directly from your phone or tablet with Bluetooth aptX™  
Plug in your computer via USB and listen to high resolution 24 bit audio  
Connect virtually any device and improve its audio performance  
Attach loudspeakers and rock, or; plug in headphones for a sublime personal listening experience  
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# OUR MONTH

What the past 31 days have brought us by way of geekery



## I LAID MY EYES ON THE IMAC'S RETINA 5K DISPLAY

Images were so sharp, it shredded my bad eyesight to bits. I could go on and on about how deep the blacks are and how the incredible resolution revealed the fine facial hairs in portraits, but you have to see it for yourself to truly appreciate it.



**Elissa Loi**  
features writer /  
enl-eye-tened



## I FACED A 3D-PRINTED ROBOT SPIDER

This hexapod robot is a showcase for Intel's Edison mini-computer — and it learnt how to walk all by itself, using a Q-learning algorithm. That's right — it's a giant mechanical spider, and we've made it self-aware. Brr.



**Stephen Graves**  
stuff.tv deputy ed /  
arachnerd

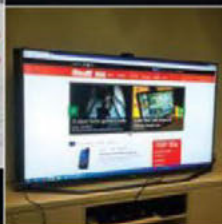


## I GOT HAND-SY WITH THE HTC RE ACTION CAMERA

HTC plans to give GoPro a run for its money with the RE action camera, and I was physically at its launch in New York to get some playtime with it. It's lightweight, small, app-friendly, and even waterproof. What more can one ask for?



**Hafizah Osman**  
news writer /  
RE-viewer



## I GOT ADDICTED TO A 79IN SCREEN

Reviewing LG's latest 79in UHD TV has ruined televisions for me (see it on p100). Now my 55in one at home seems woefully inadequate.



**Melvin Tang**  
editor / enjoying  
the view



## I SHOT ALIENS FOR 87 HOURS

That's 3.6 days of pure *Destiny*. I'm not addicted to it, though. Oh no. If I'm not playing it, I'm reading about it, or watching YouTube vids of it, and when I close my eyes all I can see are alien heads exploding in a hail of precisely-placed bullets. I'm healthy, right?



**Esat Dedezade**  
staff writer /  
off to rehab



## I VISITED PANASONIC'S KOBE FACTORY

No, I didn't taste Kobe beef. Instead, I did something even more amazing — dousing a Panasonic Toughbook with water and watching it get punched in the screen. No rugged notebooks were destroyed, just a slightly bruised hand and ego.



**Tein Hee Seow**  
online editor asia /  
bear grylls wannabe



# YOUR MONTH DEC

Good news! December's listenings, seeings and goings have all been decided



04

## SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

It might not be quite Cannes, but it's our very own celebration of film. With a focus on the great movies made in this region, it won't be long before we discover our very own Wong Kar Wai. Want to be a part of it? Get your tickets to get in on screenings.



11

## DIM SUM DOLLIES - THE HISTORY OF SINGAPORE PART 2

Get up to speed on Singapore's growth as she inches into her 50th year of independence next year. The popular Dim Sum Dollies will cover Singapore's iconic historical moments and remind you why you still love this country despite her constant changes.



11

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC SUMMIT

Started in Ibiza, the electronic music event will be hosted by Pete Tong and touch on the development of the scene in the region. So if your interest goes deeper than getting smashed, this could be an interesting insight into what makes the movers and shakers tick.



12

## ZOUKOUT

The annual beach party is back with a two-day music agenda. Featuring acts like Martin Garrix, Showtek, and Nicky Romero, it's going to be a raving good time. Remember to book your stay on the island early or risk walking back to the mainland.

20

## A JAZZY CHRISTMAS

Join local jazz sensation Jeremy Monteiro as he and his guests put the cheer of Christmas into your heart. If you were feeling all Grinchy before, the tenth edition of this concert will have you dusting off and decorating the Christmas tree in no time.



31

## SIŁOSO BEACH PARTY

If ZoukOut wasn't enough for you, all you have to do is hang in there till New Year's Eve celebrations kick in. And where better to usher in the new year than on a beach under the stars? More details to be announced on their Facebook page.



# FROM THE STUDIO TO YOUR EARS IN HI-RES

Experience music the way the artist intended with Sony's High-Resolution Audio playback devices, starting with the sleek and portable Walkman NWZ-A10 Series, which proves the best things come in small packages...

Actual Size



## WALKMAN® NWZ-A10 SERIES

According to legend, a time-travelling cyborg from the future accidentally left this behind after failing to eliminate the leader of the human resistance.

Whatever its true origins may be, 35 years of Walkman production has paid off for Sony, because they might just have made the ultimate pocket music player with the NWZ-A10 Series. In addition to being the world's smallest and lightest Hi-Res Audio digital playback device, it's beautifully engineered with a range of essential features to set it apart from other devices. Besides Sony's very own DSEE HX technology that'll upscale regular MP3 files to near Hi-Res Audio quality, it also packs other cutting-edge innovations such as S-Master HX and ClearAudio+ for rich, unparalleled sound quality and performance. It's even got NFC and aptX Bluetooth connectivity for easy pairing, and enough battery power for 30–50 hours of continuous listening. And if all that wasn't enough, Sony's equipped it with a microSD slot on top of either 16GB (in the NWZ-A15) or 64GB (in the NWZ-A17) of internal memory to store all your Hi-Res Audio tracks.



## HI-RES QUALITY NO MATTER WHAT

With much higher bit-rates than even the most detailed MP3s, Hi-Res Audio files possess much more definition, depth and clarity. However, for those of you with huge (non Hi-Res Audio) music collections, Sony's got two great technologies to make regular formats sound better too.

### S-master HX Hi-Res Audio Amplifier

This built-in digital amplifier works wonders behind the scenes to extend your music's frequency range and bit-rate, and even reduces the risk of distortion. It also suppresses noise to let you enjoy clearer sound at any listening level.

### DSEE HX Digital Sound Enhancement Engine

DSEE HX upscales compressed digital files to near Hi-Res Audio quality. Similar to how televisions upscale Standard Definition to Full HD, it restores detail lost during compression, bringing tracks as close to their original splendour as possible.

Find out more about Hi-Res Audio at  
[sony-asia.com/hiresaudio](http://sony-asia.com/hiresaudio)  
Or scan this the QR Code:



SONY'S OTHER HI-RES AUDIO PLAYBACK OFFERINGS WILL ALSO TRANSPORT YOU TO A NEW WORLD OF LISTENING



**NWZ-ZX1  
WALKMAN®**

The NWZ-ZX1 packs everything the NWZ-A10 Series has and more. With 128GB of internal storage, a 4in LCD, and Android 4.1 with Google Play support, Sony bills it as the ultimate portable Hi-Res Audio experience, and it's got the performance to back it up too.



**SRS-X9  
WIRELESS SPEAKER**

This wireless wonder will deliver powerful Hi-Res Audio with both precision and distinction, thanks to its excellent 7-unit speaker system. In fact, each speaker comes with its own dedicated digital amplifier for unparalleled performance.



with SS-HA3 speakers  
(sold separately)

**UDA-1  
USB DAC AMPLIFIER**

Connect your PC or portable Hi-Res music device to the UDA-1 via USB, plug in your headphones or speakers, and experience Hi-Res Audio at your convenience. It'll even upscale compressed formats from your regular music library to near-CD quality with its DSEE engine.



with SS-HW1 speakers  
(sold separately)

**MAP-S1  
MULTI AUDIO PLAYER SYSTEM**

A hub for all your listening, this system has a 100W amplifier to power and upscale your music to Hi-Res Audio standards. With a wide range of connectivity including CD, USB, Wi-Fi, and NFC/Bluetooth, you'll be able to use with almost every device you own.

## WIN!!! 20 Hi-Res Audio download cards at [www.stuff.tv/sg/competitions](http://www.stuff.tv/sg/competitions)

To get you started in the world of Hi-Res Audio, Sony is giving 100 lucky Stuff readers Hi-Res Audio download cards that entitle you to 20 free downloads. Simply visit the competition page on Stuff.tv and look for the Hi-Res Audio contest. Good luck!

# SONY

# APPLE **vs**







# ANDROID

It's one of the fiercest rivalries in all of tech, with the most heavily invested supporters on each side as well. Which OS will prevail?

[ Words Melvin Tang, Tein Hee Seow, Elissa Loi ]

## DESIGN

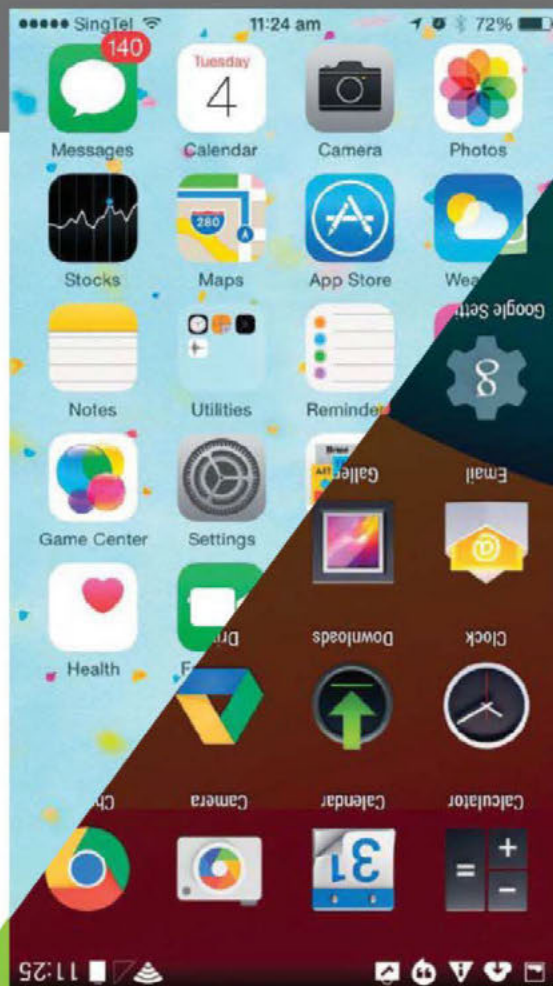
### The look and feel of things



iOS 7 was Apple's radical new redesign led by Jony Ive. The interface became flatter and more minimalist in nature, shifting away from material-mimicking elements. Unsurprisingly, iOS 8 carries its light and bright design DNA.

There's an element of translucency brought to features like Control Centre so that your wallpaper still shows through. It might not have a functional aspect, but it sure looks pretty.

Also, Parallax makes the interface come alive, with the icons seemingly floating above your wallpaper to add dimension. However the feature does put a strain on your battery, so switch it off in the Settings if you're running low on juice.



## Android

When it comes to mascot appeal, Android obviously wins with its cute little green droid dude. On the interface front, Kitkat underwent a great scrub down with an overall brightening and airy effect, leaving only the essential apps behind. That blue you were so used to in Jellybean? Gone. In its place is a largely monochromatic minimalist look that will show iOS up.

If that wasn't enough of a hint to suggest that Google means serious design business with KitKat, the attention to details in their icons will. Just take a moment to examine the icons you've always just passed your eyes over, note the detail in the Camera app icon, right down to the slightly shaded shutter button.

## STUFF SAYS

While Google has taken a step in the right design direction, iOS is still a well-honed pleasure on the eyes, giving Apple the win



**PowerShot**  
A GREAT SHOT EVERY TIME

**Canon**  
Delighting You Always

**elegance**  
steers a new course



**PowerShot G7X**

**Where sophistication meets compact, superior quality is inevitable.**

Merging compactness with superb quality, the PowerShot G7 X charts new frontiers with its large, responsive 1-inch CMOS image sensor, to deliver breathtaking image quality – even in low light situations. Coupled with its large f/1.8 optics and 9-blade aperture, you can cleverly accentuate images, including portraits with beautiful background blur. Meanwhile the versatility of a 180° tilting LCD touchscreen makes selfie shooting effortless. The PowerShot G7 X – It's simply empowering.



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## FEATURES

### Which makes life easier?

#### iOS 8

##### ■ PICTURE PERFECT

The snappy shooter deserves a Camera app worthy of its imaging skills. Easy to use, users can swipe between Square, Photo, Panorama, Video and Time-Lapse to select their shooting mode. Also, you can now adjust exposure in real time to see the effects before taking your shot.

Are you a filter fanatic? Then iOS 8's new photo tweaking options within the Photos app should please you. Not only can you adjust the tilt and choose from a score of non-destructive filters, you can go deeper in detail and pick on minor details to make your photo look a whole lot better.

##### ■ GUIDING LIGHT

At launch, Apple Maps was often criticised for being inaccurate, taking users on wild goose chases that end up in dead ends and the like. But it has since gotten its act together and become a lot more reliable. Also included now is the Flyover mode for major cities (Singapore isn't one yet) that allows for a bird's eye view of wherever you wish you were instead of here.

##### ■ COMMUNICATIONS

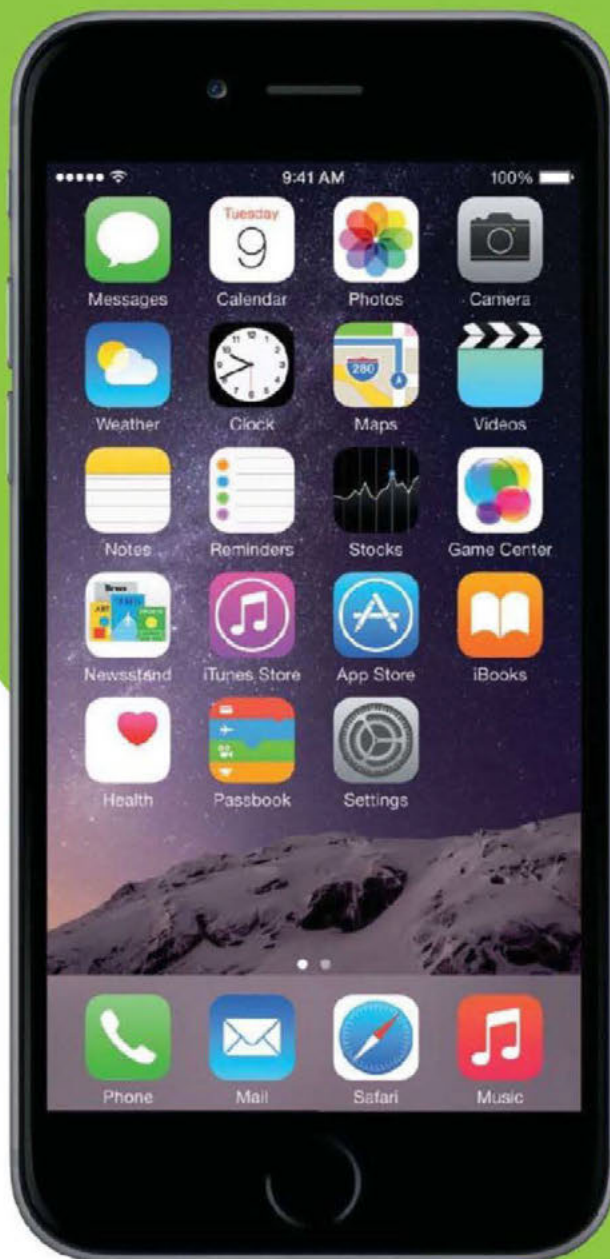
The default texting system, iMessage, has taken a leaf out of many chat apps' books by enabling users to send auto-self-destructing photos and videos, as well as voice messages. Gone are the boring old days of using only text, welcome to the new iMessage system.

##### ■ APPLE PAY

Finally, the iPhone gets NFC capabilities. But don't rejoice just yet. It doesn't work with anything outside of Apple Pay for the moment. However, if Apple Pay ever makes its way into Singapore, shopping will be transformed into an effortless one-tap system. In the meantime, we'll settle for it opening up to work with NFC-enabled accessories.

##### ■ TOUCH ID

Apple's fingerprint reader is fast and secure, needing just a few seconds to process your print. Now that it's opening up to be used with other apps, it just means a world of convenience as you have to key in your complicated hack-safe password less and less.







## Android 4.4 KitKat

### ■ GOOGLE MAPS

Still the best map experience thanks to its early established presence, Google Maps has given many a user reliable directions and updated traffic information. Also, tons of entertainment at opportune Street View moments and access to places we'd otherwise never be able to go. One fine example being the Liwa Desert which was mapped by mounting a Trekker on a camel. You'd never be able to see what it looks like otherwise.

### ■ WIDGETS

Make your phone look exactly the way you want. Don't wish to open up an app just to check on a tiny detail? Affix the miniature view of the app, also known as a widget, to your phone's home screen to get pertinent updates quickly and instant access. Picking the right ones will make your mobile experience all that more pleasurable.

### ■ DATA MANAGEMENT

Mobile data plans for Singapore are a stingy bunch, offering mostly 2GB or 3GB plans. That puts most users on the brink of having to pay more when they exceed their limit given how media hungry the masses are these days. But with Android's baked-in data management, you get options to set the data limit so that the connection is cut off once you hit it and you don't chalk up a shocking bill by the end of the month.

### ■ MULTIPLE USER PROFILES

One device for many family members. That's what Google had in mind when enabling multiple user profiles in Android. Set up to eight different user profiles and assign different apps and content on them so that the same device caters specially to each user. Great for granting access to your kids and not having to worry about what they might be doing.

### ■ GOOGLE PHOTO SPHERE

Android one-ups iOS with 360-degree photos. Now you don't have to take multiple shots to show a place off to anyone, just sweep the camera around to take one immersive photo and truly translate the experience.

## STUFF SAYS

Each system has its own merits but we're giving Android props for its open-endedness and countless possibilities

## GOING NATIVE

### The first apps you set your sights on are the most important

#### iOS

##### ■ MAIL

iOS's Mail app is an even match with Gmail in terms of aesthetics. Intuitive swipe gestures make up the bulk of the interface – a swipe from right to left yields options to flag, delete or bring up additional choices such as forwarding emails. Minimal thought, maximum efficiency.

##### ■ CALENDAR

Want to invite others to an event? Sorry, iOS users. You won't find that option here. But what it has in common with Android users is a reminder to leave for your meeting. Heck, it can even predict how long it takes to get there and send the reminder based on your travel time.

##### ■ MAPS

Remember Apple's little snafu, the one where Tim Cook had to apologise for a mediocre navigation app and even recommend others? Fortunately, that's a thing of the past, as Apple's Maps app has improved with more accurate turn-by-turn navigation. Against Google Maps, which had a few extra years to work out the kinks? Quite a bit to catch up on.

##### ■ SAFARI

Again, swipe gestures save the day for iOS, allowing you to simply sweep your thumb from an edge to another to move between web pages. Safari's greatest advantage lies with Reader, which removes all the clutter from a compatible webpage, leaving only the text and images that matters for reading.



#### Android

##### ■ Gmail

There's little to complain about Android's Gmail app. It's clean, simple to use, and most of all, well integrated with your Google account. As far as intelligent mailboxes are concerned, the Gmail app works seamlessly with its mail server, understanding what emails should be prioritised and even suggest labels that each email should fall under.

##### ■ CALENDAR

Toss that paper calendar away. Android not only lets you add the date and time to your calendar entry, it even lets you specify the location and provide directions to it via Google Maps. It's a calendar entry for a party, you say? Why, just send out the invites on the app itself, you don't even have to send out separate emails for that.

##### ■ MAPS

Like iOS, the native navigation app for Android has all the basics covered, including turn-by-turn voice navigation and traffic conditions. What Android adds to the tablet are options such as accident reports and saving offline maps. Trust us, you'll get to your location faster with Google Maps.

##### ■ CHROME

The updated Google Chrome gives you a taste of Android Lollipop's Material Design UI – uncluttered and flat design with minimal frills. Here's a secret – did you know Chrome has a reduce data usage option? Goodbye, unexpected data charges. Usability, however, is still sorely lacking compared to Safari on iOS, often requiring you to tap on options instead of intuitive swipe gestures.



**STUFF SAYS** You'll do better with Google's OS, with its stronger apps for calendar, maps and mail



## UP IN THE CLOUDS

### Between iCloud Drive and Google Drive, choose wisely to keep your data easily accessible

#### iCloud Drive

##### ■ WHAT CAN IT STORE?

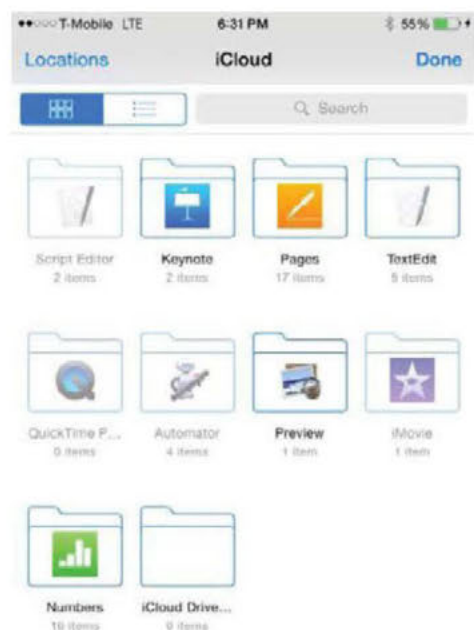
Everything. Photos, app data, contacts, calendar, mail, the list goes on. If you're team Apple, there's more – passwords across your iPhone, iPad and even Macs are shared. Definitely useful if you're having trouble remembering the numerous permutations of your passwords.

##### ■ STORAGE SPACE

5GB. It doesn't sound like a lot of space. Truth is, you'll bust that limit pretty fast if you're a trigger happy photographer and sync photos to iCloud Drive. Expansion options start from \$1.28 per month for 20GB, and go as high as \$24.99 a month for 1TB of storage.

##### ■ FILE MANAGEMENT

Apple's iCloud Drive is like a silent worker – syncing files in the background, without much of a presence. Unfortunately, you won't find an app that lets you view all the files saved on iCloud Drive. Instead, you'll need to go into the corresponding app for the file, say that document in Pages.



#### Google Drive

##### ■ WHAT CAN IT STORE

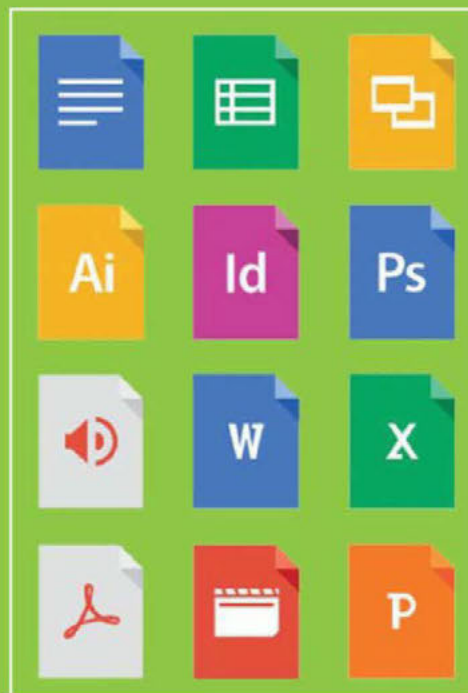
You name it, Google Drive can store it. It's the repository for photos that are automatically uploaded via Google+ and file attachments that colleagues love to spam your Gmail inbox with. The only thing it can't sync is your password – bummer for the forgetful crowd.

##### ■ STORAGE SPACE

You start off with 15GB. Not too shabby, and what's even better? Files created with Google Docs, Sheets or Slides don't count towards the storage limit. It's also crazy affordable, giving you 100GB of storage for a monthly US\$1.99 (\$2.50) subscription.

##### ■ FILE MANAGEMENT

There's an app for that, and it's called Google Drive. And it's very powerful, giving you immediate access to everything you've uploaded. Need to bring some travel documents along? Save it within your device, and you won't have to worry about roaming data charges when you access your travel itinerary.



#### STUFF SAYS

Bigger, cheaper and more importantly, easily accessible. These are the three key features that make Google Drive the clear winner against Apple's recent iCloud Drive

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## Find the stock Android UI too boring? Google's open approach towards customisation gives you more options to choose from

### Samsung TouchWiz

#### ■ DESIGN

Samsung's reputation for cluttered UIs and unnecessary bloatware is finally gone. This year's Samsung Galaxy S5 and Samsung Galaxy Note 4 have shown a much cleaner and flatter design than its predecessors.

#### ■ MY MAGAZINE

Akin to HTC's BlinkFeed, My Magazine is a similar news aggregator that pulls and rearranges your news feed into a magazine-style layout. Likewise, social networks can be integrated into this aggregator, allowing you to sift through the news that matter in mere minutes. Plus, once you're done, it's smart enough to recommend more related news for your consumption.

#### ■ S VOICE

In this case, we're pretty sure S stands for Samsung. Just like its S-branded rival Siri, S Voice is an intelligent assistant that answers all your burning questions. Well, not really, it can't teach you to strike lottery. But at the very least, it'll set you on the right course when you ask for directions or search for food recommendations with it.

#### ■ MULTI WINDOW

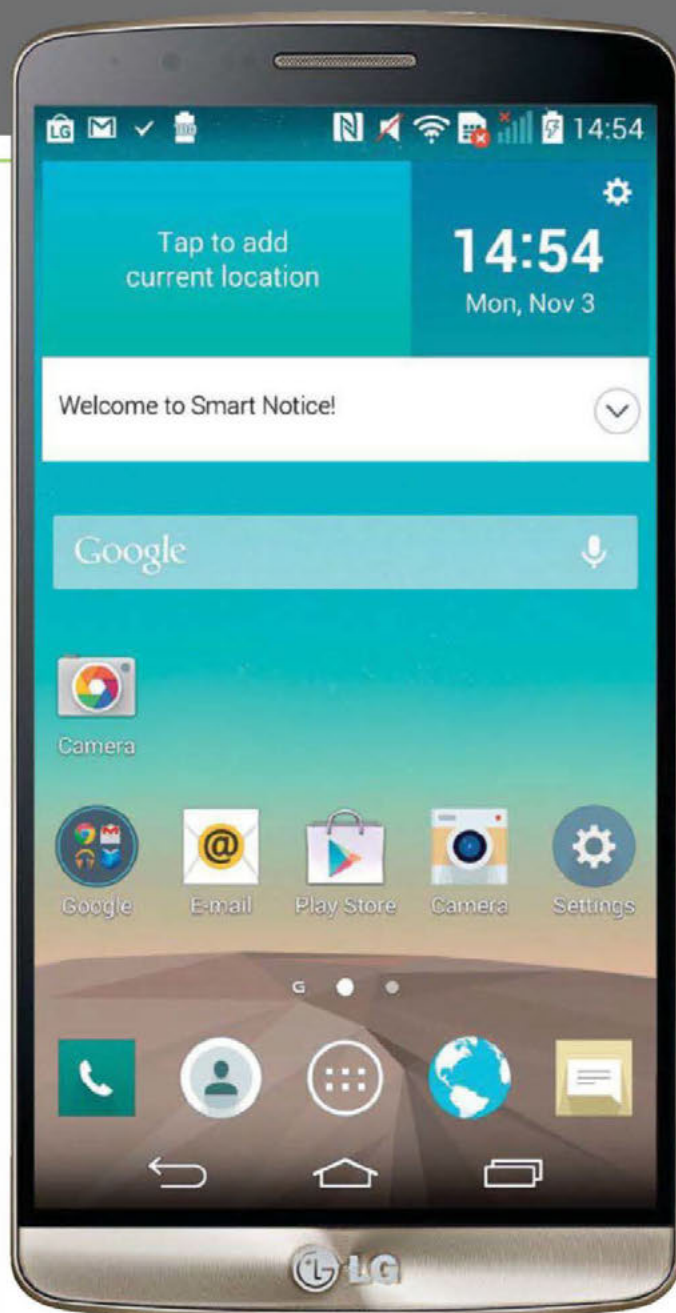
The practicality of using two apps concurrently often comes into question. Multi Window manages to answer that very well. Rather than going to the recent apps tray, just bring up another app, drag and drop images into the WhatsApp group. Done. It's so seamless, you might use more than two apps once you get the hang of it.

#### ■ POWER SAVER MODE

Most Android phones come with a power saver mode that reduces the features of the device when it's running low on battery. Samsung's implementation is quite similar, with an added function - turning your colour screen into a black and white affair. Looks dreary to some, but it adds a dash of nostalgia while you play games and read emails on a monochrome display.







## LG Optimus UI

### ■ DESIGN

Somehow, every Android maker's UI design team got the same memo – keeping it flat. The same goes for LG's Optimus UI, which adopts a minimalist design that focuses on a wireframe style. Transitions between menus and pages have also received a revamp, with an emphasis on a smooth flow rather than a quick snap.

### ■ SMART NOTICE

Think of this as LG's take on Google Now. Unlike Apple's Siri or Samsung's S Voice, Smart Notice throws up timely reminders in the form of cards. This includes traffic notifications to avoid those nasty jams. Most importantly, it has a card that nags you to switch on your battery saver mode when the phone's running low on juice.

### ■ QSLIDE

Apps that pop up as floating windows, just what the doctor ordered for the busy individual. LG's implementation of the QSlide feature adds a few more nifty little features. One of which is the ability to make the pop-up app turn opaque, giving you a full view of your home page. Just goes to show how a little thought in the design can go a long way in terms of usability.

### ■ KNOCK CODE

Fingerprint scanning? You'll spend more time swiping or placing the finger right to unlock the phone. Drawing a pattern? Fingerprint smudges will give the game away. Knock Code has none of these issues. Set as many knocks as you want across the screen. Sure, fingerprints will be there, but it'll take forever to crack the code.

### ■ CUSTOMISABLE HOME TOUCH BUTTONS

LG's Android customisation goes deeper. While most Android phones have back, home and recent apps as the touch buttons (not in that particular order), the Optimus UI allows you to realign the buttons based on your preference. What's more, you can have up to five touch buttons, adding quick access to notifications, QuickMemo, QSlide or dual window to the front.

## HTC Sense

### ■ DESIGN

The Taiwanese firm's long history with smartphones has given it an advantage with its UI design. It bears a very close resemblance to Android's stock UI but comes with its distinct flavour. Sorting apps based on alphabetical order (not unique to HTC) and realigning the size of the apps grid give it a decent level of customisation without being too in your face.

### ■ BLINKFEED

The pride and joy of HTC's UI design is seen in its BlinkFeed. Simply calling it a news aggregator won't do it justice, because BlinkFeed is much more than that. Besides integrating your social networks into the feed, it also goes through your calendar entries. The powerful feature intelligently highlights your meetings, showing you the things that matter most at that particular point in time. And it helps that the interface is perhaps one of the most beautiful we've ever seen, second to Flipboard.

### ■ HTC ZOE

Pretty pictures aren't enough for HTC. Trust them to give you more imaging options to improve HTC Sense. In particular, HTC's Zoe gives users a more creative canvas to work with, capturing a series of photos in succession and videos. The effect? You'll get shots even before the shutter button is tapped.

### ■ FITBIT INTEGRATION

The number of steps you've taken or climbed could see a potential rise with this year's smartphones. HTC's integration of its motion sensors with Fitbit makes sense – going with a tried and tested fitness app is more likely to get existing Fitbit users interested. Unlike in-house Samsung's S Health and LG Health apps, which you'll probably be downloading more updates as the months pass.

### ■ MOTION LAUNCH GESTURES

Taking inspiration from LG's KnockOn feature, HTC's motion launch gestures also utilises the double tap function to awaken the phone. But there's more to this – a left swipe launches the widget panel, while going right brings up BlinkFeed. An upward swipe unlocks the phone, or swipe downwards to activate the voice dialing function.





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## Sony UI

### ■ DESIGN

Of the four Android makers, Sony has been the most consistent with its UI and that's a good thing. From the very start, it has adopted a clean and no-frills approach to its design. Widgets are aplenty, but it doesn't force its way onto the home screen. Rather, it's very much like Google's approach – making its presence felt only when the user requires it to appear, like its music player.

### ■ LIFELOG

Much like its counterparts, Lifelog keeps your health in check by tracking steps, sleep cycles and time, plus food intake. It could even monitor the length of your game time on the Xperia smartphone, and collate images and videos taken through the day as a, well, life log. If anything, this is very much the quantification of your mobile lifestyle.

### ■ SMALL APPS

Do not be deceived by its name, for these add-ons add a lot more functionality to Sony's already impressive UI. Yes, it's also a pop-up app. It doesn't sound terribly exciting, but the potential is limitless. You don't even need to switch out to a calculator app when you're tallying the bill. Just tap on recent apps, followed by the calculator icon and you'll have it floating on-screen.

### ■ REMOTE PLAY

Of all the features, this is Sony's strongest yet – the ability to remotely play PlayStation 4 games on Xperia smartphones. Link both devices to the same Wi-Fi network, and you'll be running through Destiny raids on the Android smartphone. The caveat? You'll need to pair a Dualshock 4 controller (which you should already have) to Sony's Android smartphone. And, this unique feature is limited to the latest Z3 range and selected Z2 devices from earlier this year.





## USER EXPERIENCE

### The defining hallmarks of each OS

#### iOS

##### ■ SEAMLESS

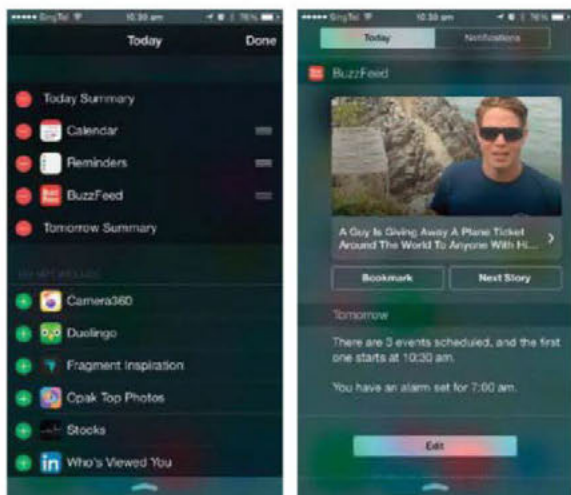
If you have an entire suite of Apple products, the new Continuity feature will make a whole lot of sense to you. For example, you can now receive calls and messages from your phone via your Mac or iPad. And if you're working on something important via email, Handoff allows you to pick up from where you left off from device to device.

##### ■ SLIGHTLY MORE OPEN

Rejoice, the formerly control-freak system is now a lot more third party-friendly. Instead of having to stick with what Apple bestowed upon you, users can now replace the native keyboard with third-party ones that better suit their typing style. That's not the only aspect of the system that's open to input now. You can also add widgets to the Notification Centre that's refreshed every time you pull it down. Developers are continuously rolling out widgets for iOS, so don't despair if options are a little limited right now.

##### ■ SIMPLE

Apple prefers to keep the experience as pure as possible, even if it's at the expense of customisation. But why should you need to? You have everything you need. Even backups are as automatic as they come. Everything lives in the cloud, or the iCloud to be specific. All your content will be available across devices so long as you sync them using your iCloud account. This proves to be extremely convenient if you're updating your phone or upgrading to a new device that iUsers are taking it for granted. Also iCloud storage is a lot more affordable to accommodate your ever-growing store of content.



#### Android

##### ■ CUSTOMISABLE

The main appeal of Android that keeps the fanboys flocking is its openness. You get to choose what shows up on your immediate screen so you won't have to flick through page after page of unused apps. Also, you won't even have to open up an app with a widget providing everything (weather information, exchange rates) you need at your fingertips. Super convenient.

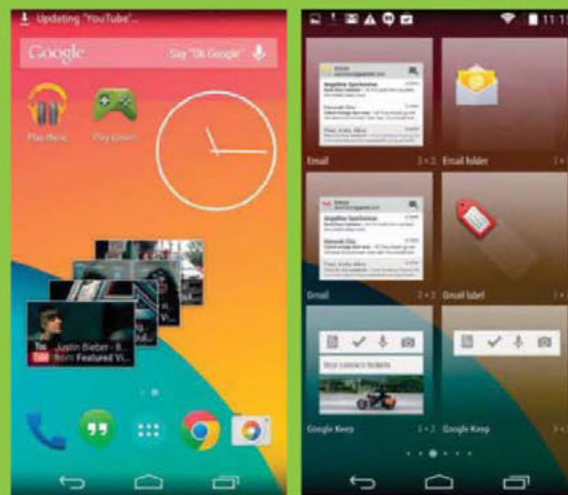
And if you don't like the way your Android interface looks, you can always change it.

##### ■ CONTROL

If you're the type who values being able to control every aspect of your operating system, Android is for you. Google doesn't try to be the boss of you; instead it gives you the tools and lets you take the reins. For instance, you can get right into the inner workings of each app via Settings. So if one app is acting up, you can address the specific problem by clearing its cache or uninstalling buggy updates.

##### ■ EXPANSIVE

There's no end to how you can use Kitkat, thanks to all the options it offers up to users. Your Android-powered phone could work with other items in the real world via NFC like unlocking a door once you touch your phone to an NFC tag. Another key thing to note here is that you get expandable storage with most Android devices via a microSD card slot, yet another point for Android over iOS.



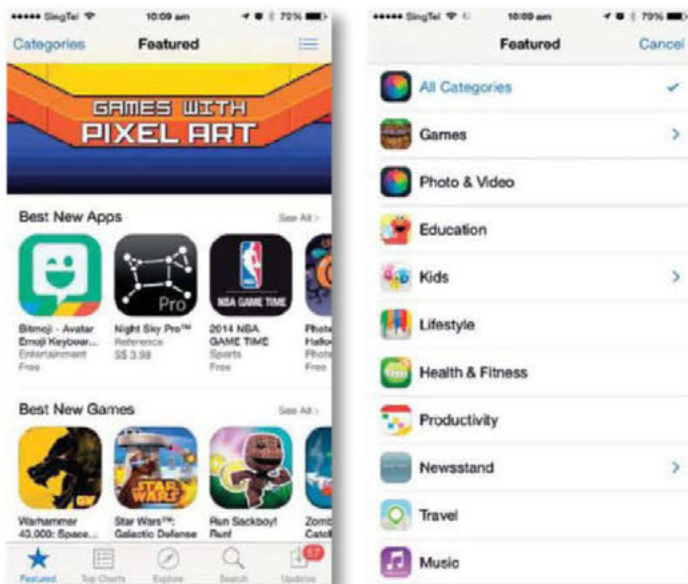
#### STUFF SAYS

Android takes the lead here, presenting a vast horizon of options that even iOS is beginning to implement into their own system

## APP STORES

Apps are the cornerstone of the user experience when it comes to smart devices. Which platform caters to more people?

### Apple App Store



#### ■ APPS

The storefront is regularly updated with features that point users to what's hot that week. For example, when iOS 8 was just launched, games that used the latest Metal technology were highlighted for ease of download so that users don't have to trawl through the entire store unguided.

#### ■ RANGE

Back at WWDC in June, Apple announced that the apps in the App Store are totaling 1.2 million, so it should have climbed a fair bit by now. From yoga-coaching apps to specialist photography apps, you'll be hard pressed to not go download-crazy. Apps are also separated by devices and easily found thanks to the organised layout of the store.

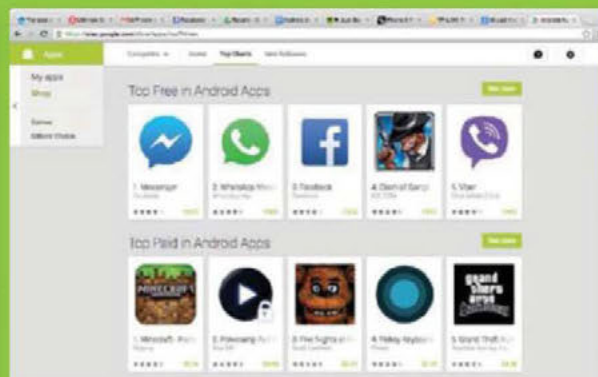
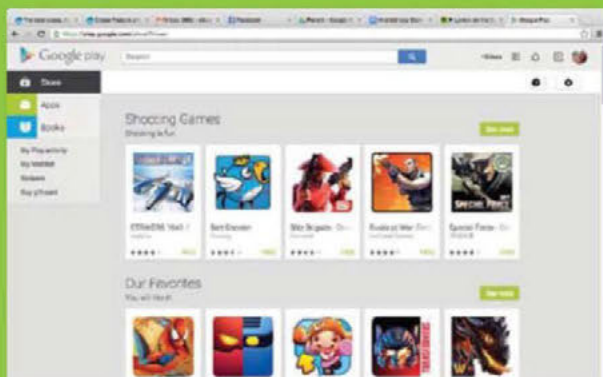
#### ■ PRICING

You can now buy them in bundles to save a bit if you find yourself returning to the same developer's content. To save even more money, activate Family Sharing and you don't have to repurchase the same app for up to six members in your family. Apps range from \$1.28 to \$5.98 usually, with the odd one exceeding \$10.





## Google Play Store



### ■ APPS

Similarly sorted into categories like Apps, Books and Games, users can easily get to what they want. However, Google's openness is also its main undoing at this point as it allows for malware to creep into the system. Beware of viruses if you're using Android.

### ■ RANGE

Vast. Statistics report that there were as many as 1.3 million apps on the Google Play Store as of July 2014. Thanks to the number of devices using this operating system, developers are very open to making apps for Android.

### ■ PRICING

The app prices fluctuate as they're based on the US rates. The differences are not significant, unless you're constantly shopping for apps, then yes, every little bit will add up. So until Google sets up store locally, you'll just have to accept the inconsistent pricing for what it is.

## RECOMMENDED APPS



### **SPOTIFY** S\$free / iOS, Android

The de facto music-streaming service has all the music you can possibly want. Best of all it's free. If you want uninterrupted music, you'll have to fork over \$9.99 for the premium service. Trust us, it's worth every cent.



### **SCRIBD** S\$free / iOS, Android

If you're a fast reader who devours books faster than your bank account gets refilled, it's better to pay a one-time fee for a buffet of books at your disposal. Read anything from Neil Gaiman to Stephen King and even Kurt Vonnegut for just US\$8.99 (\$11.50) a month.



### **SWORKIT** S\$free / iOS, Android

Too busy to exercise? You'll have no excuse to skip the gym with this circuit-training app. Providing both cardio and toning, you choose the length of exercise and the area of your body you want to work on. There's enough free content there to keep you occupied.

## STUFF SAYS

Both systems are very good at populating their ecosystems. But we're giving it to iOS based on the overall quality

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## LOLLIPOP'S SWEET TREATS

### Google's made numerous improvements, but we've listed the top eight reasons you should upgrade to Android 5.0 Lollipop

#### IT'S MORE PRIVATE

You'll now be able to have multiple user accounts on your phones, letting you share a device and still maintain personal privacy for your stuff. What's more, you can even log in to your account on one device to access information on another one. There's also a new guest mode so your friends can borrow your device without access to everything in it.

#### IT'LL MAKE YOUR PHONE LAST LONGER

How would you like your phone to last an extra 90mins whenever it's low on power? A new battery saver feature promises to do just that, though there are understandably some usage compromises. Timers have also been introduced to reflect the amount of time left on your current charge, as well as how long it'll take to hit 100% when plugged in.

#### IT'S LESS INTRUSIVE

Notifications are now much more customisable, affording a greater level of control on the way you receive them. You can even reply to messages straight from the lock screen now, as well as hide stuff you don't want showing up at all. Phone calls also won't take over your entire screen any more, instead popping up discreetly to be dismissed without interrupting what you're doing.

More importantly, Google's just added a do-not-disturb mode as default in Lollipop. Ok, they call it Priority mode, but it does the same thing – only selected contacts and notifications make their way through when you schedule or enable it.

#### IT'S FASTER

Better software means phones and tablets running Lollipop are up to four times faster in terms of performance when compared to KitKat. Operations are also made much smoother, and the OS now also supports 64-bit devices and apps to handle complex tasks better.

#### IT'S MORE SECURE

Our mobile devices are so personal now that we store a ton of sensitive information in them. Lollipop now comes with automatic encryption, ensuring intruders won't be able to access your info without your password. Apps have also been reinforced against unauthorised access.



#### IT'S EASIER TO SET UP

Setting up a new phone always takes ages, due to the process of backing up and restoring apps from your old phone. Now, all it takes is one touch if you have NFC. Just tap the new device to the old one, and it'll bring everything over automatically.

#### IT'LL SEARCH BETTER

Google is synonymous with Internet searches, and they've made it even easier. Even when the screen is off, you can search for things just by saying "Ok Google" on certain devices, which is almost Jarvis-like. What's more, Lollipop lets Google Now launch any installed apps you may have, as long as it's related to your search query.

#### IT'S PRETTIER

A flatter, more colourful UI was already introduced in Android KitKat, but Lollipop takes it to the next level with Material Design. It's much cleaner all-round, with new brighter colours, fonts, and graphic elements. Interaction also feels much more fluid with natural motions and animations. Everything's more evolutionary than revolutionary, but that's still a good thing here.



## VOICE INTERACTION

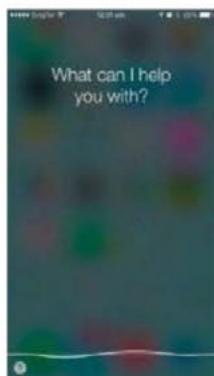
We all want to be able to speak to our phones like Samantha in Her. Which comes closest?

## Siri

Her inability to recognise local accents has come under fire many times, leaving users frustrated at her knack for mishearing questions. But there's one thing you can't fault Siri for – her personality, which makes interaction a lot more enjoyable even if it's misheard. Her reaction to our question "Is Siri better than Google Now?" turned up a almost huffy "I don't really have anything to say about Google now. Or ever." iOS 8 has also added the ability to call upon Siri when your phone is plugged into an outlet simply by saying "Hey Siri". And it comes up pretty fast, even once when we went "Seriously?" within hearing distance of the phone. Kind of creepy.

## Response rate

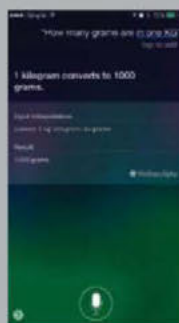
A noticeable pause between question and answer time, and she's not a hundred percent accurate to boot. But she does offer up the option of editing by just tapping and then typing.



## KNOWLEDGE TEST

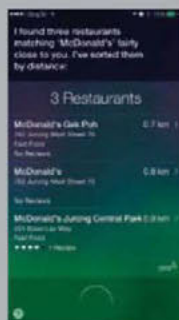
Q1

How many grams are in one kg?  
Google Now offered more suggestions while Siri gave a straight answer. Can't fault either.



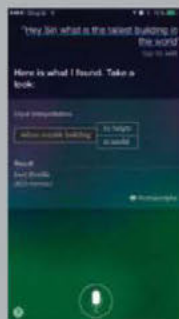
Q2

Where is the nearest McDonalds?  
Google Now turned up the typical Google search page, while Siri went the extra mile by listing three choices and then the nearest one to us.



Q3

What is the tallest building in the world?  
Even before turning up the answer, Siri took the time to let me know that she was "checking on that" and then gave me the specific answer that we were looking for. Google Now went the lazier route and gave us a generic list of tall buildings.

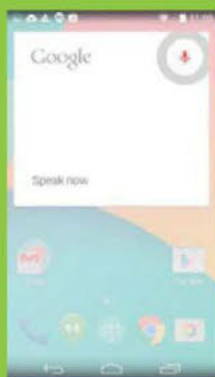


## Google Now

Quick and snappy, all you have to do to activate the voice recognition system is to say "Okay Google". But it's all functional. Asking it personal questions will not turn up any interesting snarky responses. It is, however, very useful and accurate, trawling Google Search for the right answers to your most probing questions. Just think of it as your voice-activated Google Search assistant who also opens up apps and calls people on your behalf with no personality whatsoever.

## Response rate:

Almost instantaneous and highly accurate every time. There was no need for us to repeat ourselves. Very efficient, Google Now.



## STUFF SAYS

Siri wins. That winning personality is hard to beat although she can be rather hard-of-hearing sometimes. But that all makes her feel more real, we suppose

## WEARABLES

### LG G Watch R vs Apple Watch

#### Which will win the war for your wrist?

#### LG G Watch R

##### ■ DESIGN

We wouldn't call the G Watch R slim or sleek, and dainty-wristed gadgeteers might find it a little on the larger side. LG has attempted to make it look like a 'normal' digital timepiece, so you'll see permanent hour and minute marks on the fairly chunky bezel which, coupled with the digital clock faces.

In the hands, the G Watch R feels solid and well made, with a strong metal casing that feels as if it can take its fair share of knocks and bumps. It's got a fake crown on the side, which actually serves as the power/sleep button, and a long press also throws up the settings. While it can be twisted like a real watch crown, this offers no extra functionality, unlike the Apple Watch's alternative, which can act as a zoom controller. Flip it over, and you'll find a plain black, rough plastic back. Embedded in the middle is a heart-rate scanner, while a set of charging pins flanks the left hand side.

The watch strap itself is genuine leather, and while it feels nice, it's very stiff at first. Like most other smartwatches, the G Watch R supports standard-sized straps, so you can swap between regular metal, leather and rubber straps. Its IP67 rating also means that you can chuck it in up to one metre of water for 30 minutes, though we obviously wouldn't advise testing this out. The occasional splash from downpours and hand washing though? No problem.

##### ■ MAIN FEATURES

The main use for smartwatches at the moment is receiving notifications discretely, and Android Wear goes beyond this by giving you options to mute, reply, or even delete messages and emails. If you receive a text or WhatsApp message for example, you can choose to open it on your phone so you can reply using a proper keyboard instantly.

Alternatively, you could reply directly from the G Watch R itself using either a selection of preset messages, or use the voice dictation function. Android Wear's voice recognition is pretty good for the most part, as long as you stick to easy names and uncomplicated sentences. And no, Singlish won't work. 'Ok, Google' voice commands generally work well too.

Android Wear remains a bit of an apps wasteland, with the majority of those available currently consisting of watch faces – most of which look a little tacky in our opinion. As Android Wear is adopted by more people, we expect to see more apps join the roster, offering more functionality and enhancing the Wear experience.

##### ■ BATTERY LIFE

LG has gifted the G Watch R with a 410mAh battery and an always-on Ambient Mode, which is a low-power mode that kicks in after a few seconds of inactivity. The watch face becomes monochrome (which can help extend battery further, thanks to the OLED screen), until a notification comes through or you activate it with a tap. You could further extend battery life by turning ambient mode off: do this and the screen will stay completely blank until the R detects that you're looking at it, or you interact with it. While you won't quite get two days out of it in normal use, you probably could if you were careful. Getting one full day out of it should never be a problem – and that's more than could be said of most Android Wear devices.

##### ■ CAN BE USED WITH:

The G Watch R is useless on its own, meaning you need to pair to an Android device to work. It's compatible with all Android devices running 4.3 Jelly Bean or higher.

**\$398 / [lg.com/sg](http://lg.com/sg)**





## Apple Watch

### ■ DESIGN

There are three versions available: the Apple Watch (made of stainless steel); the Apple Watch Sport (made of aluminium); and the Apple Watch Edition (made of 18-carat gold, no less). And there are two different sizes for each (38 and 42mm) as well as a huge selection of different, easy-to-connect straps. Build quality is what you'd expect from Apple: light but strong, and slim, too. Apple has been careful to keep it from looking bulky, and even the larger version didn't look out of place on a dainty female wrist.

The dial – sorry, Digital Crown – looks less obtrusive in real life than it does in Apple's promo shots. It's smaller than the dials on most men's watches, but it's also very easy to access. Turning the crown feels light, with very little resistance and no click. It's a great piece of design, allowing you to zoom in or out and move things on screen without covering them with your fat fingers.

The Watch also got the supremely tough and scratch-resistant sapphire crystal glass screen we'd been hoping for. It's a touchscreen retina display with a difference: it can detect force as well as mere touch. That means you can tap to select something, or press harder for what Apple calls "Force Touch" – it's a bit like the right button on a mouse and will be used to quickly access certain functions, depending on the context.

### ■ MAIN FEATURES

The demo unit we tried on was running a loop of app demos, and a couple used the 'taptic engine', as Apple calls it, or buzzer, as we're going to call it. The haptics in the Apple Watch have that sort of nuanced feel, with the heartbeat delivered as a softly detailed pulse.

As for notifications, you can reply to messages via dictation, via an animated emoji, or with an automatically generated response. For the latter, the Watch will give you options based on the content of the message. You can also use it like a walkie-talkie to chat to other Watch wearers nearby, which is pretty cool. Oh, and you can send your Watch-owning friends little drawings you've made on the screen, as well as something very unusual: a "recording" of your heartbeat which they'll feel thanks to the Watch's vibrations.

Among the apps shown at the launch were Twitter, Pinterest, Maps, Nike, a music player, photos (the Watch can also act as your iPhone camera's viewfinder), and airline notifications. You'll also be able to wave it in front of a hotel room door to unlock it, and it works with Apple Pay. Obviously, we'll have to wait until more developers get their hands on the SDK before we see what's really possible.



### ■ BATTERY LIFE

Apple has been cagey on the subject of the Watch's battery until now, with most pundits suggesting the company was still looking for a way to extend it, but it seems they've settled on it lasting a day per charge, according to Tim Cook during an interview. We'll really have to wait for it to be launched to find out more.

### ■ CAN BE USED WITH:

This should come as no great surprise, but the Apple Watch will act as a companion device only to Apple products. At launch, that'll be the iPhone 5, iPhone 5c, iPhone 5s, iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus. No iPads. They'll connect via Bluetooth 4.0 (there's Wi-Fi on board, too).

from approx US\$350 (\$450) / [apple.com/sg](http://apple.com/sg)



**STUFF SAYS** Although it isn't available yet, the Apple Watch seems to have more going for it

## UPDATES

### Constant improvements to keep your phone current without buying a new one

#### iOS

##### ■ INSTALLING UPDATES

If there's one thing Apple's infamous for, it's the OS update. To be precise, it's the over-the-air update that draws comments. Such updates usually require a few GB of free storage to download and install on iDevices. 16GB iPad or iPhone? Good luck, you'll need to do some apps housekeeping. Of course, you could go through the old-school method – update via iTunes and keep your apps intact.

##### ■ HOW OFTEN?

We're kind of stating the obvious here – expect iOS updates to roll out every year. Typically, you'll get a preview of it during Apple's Worldwide Developer Conference in June. Three months later, the iOS updates coincide with the new iPhone launch, which happens sometime in the month of September to October. This has become a clockwork of sorts for Apple, but there are minor updates along the way to rectify known bugs.

##### ■ DEVICE SUPPORT

Is that an iPhone 4s you're using? Don't worry, you're safe for now. Apple's iOS updates usually stretch to devices from two generations ago. Which makes sense, since devices more than two years old tend to act out. If anything, Apple's update cycle is a timely reminder for you to update your outdated iDevice.



iPhone 4s

iPhone 5

iPhone 5c



iPhone 5s

iPhone 6

iPhone 6 Plus

#### Android

##### ■ INSTALLING UPDATES

Android updates are simple and fuss-free. Once it's available, expect a notification to appear, reminding you to perform the long awaited update. Unlike iOS, you won't have to worry about making space for the updates.

##### ■ HOW OFTEN?

Here's where the going gets tough for Android fans. While Google's Nexus devices get the update almost immediately, the latest update might not roll out right for Google's Android partners. Reason? Every Android update equates to the retooling of the customisation, leading to an extended timeline for the rollout. The typical timeline for the rollout could stretch from three to six months.

##### ■ DEVICE SUPPORT

Android presents a lot of choices. But it also reveals a fatal flaw – fragmentation. Whilst Apple's portfolio is streamlined to the iPhone, iPad and even iPod, Google's OS is scattered across a myriad of devices. What's the likelihood of a two-year old Android phone getting the fancy features? Don't place too much hope on it.



Nexus 6



Nexus 5



HTC One (M8)



Moto G

#### STUFF SAYS

Apple's comprehensive iOS updates guarantee you the latest and best features for your iDevices



## FLAGSHIP PHONES

### Both camps' top handsets battle it out for supremacy

#### iPhone 6 Plus

##### ■ PLUS SIZED MODEL

It really is just an upscaled iPhone 6, with the same front glass panel that curves smoothly into the rounded aluminium body for a really comfortable fit. It's extremely thin at just 7.1mm too, making it feel much smaller than it really is in the hand. However, the protruding camera lens on the back does divide opinion.

##### ■ RETINA SCANNING

The iPhone 6 Plus has a 5.5in screen with a 1920x1080 resolution and 401ppi pixel density, but that doesn't seem to tell the whole story. Everything on the phone looks spectacular, with major improvements on the previous model in terms of colour, contrast, white balance, brightness, and viewing angles. It even has a new built-in polariser that should make it easier to view while you're wearing sunglasses.

##### ■ LUCKY NUMBER EIGHT

On the 6 Plus, you get the same 8MP snapper that Apple's stuck to, which still produces excellent images with great ease of use. However, there's also superior optical image stabilisation available, which means you can shoot in lower light situations and still get sharp images. All the other new features such as 240fps,

time-lapse, and more are present, but the advantage of the bigger screen is you can frame up more exactly. Plus, you can see the results more clearly on this bigger, more detailed display.

##### ■ BORN PERFORMER

iPhone performance is never about specs, or it'd consistently be knocked out by more powerful Android phones. The new A8 processor is lightning quick, with the M8 co-processor taking care of motion-related tasks such as measuring altitude with the built-in barometer to detect how many flights stairs you've climbed. As always, the battery isn't removable, and there's no SD slot. However, internal memory now runs up to 128GB, which should more than make up for it.

##### ■ LIVING LARGE

A bigger phone also means a bigger battery, and it seems Apple's dedicated most of the extra real estate to filling the phone with more juice. While a larger screen also equates to higher power consumption, they've more than made up for it, with the 6 Plus usually lasting more than a day, even with heavy use.

from \$1148 / [apple.com/sg](http://apple.com/sg)



#### Nexus 6

##### ■ HELLO GIANT MOTO

The Nexus 6 is essentially a giant Moto X, which is no surprise given that Motorola designed it. It's massive, measuring in at just under 160mm long – a smidgen more than the gargantuan iPhone 6 Plus. It shares the Moto X's rounded design, dual front-facing speakers, and rear dimple. The most obvious visual difference is the nexus logo stamped on the rear, along with the lower position of the power and volume buttons on the right hand side, to accommodate for the larger size.

##### ■ YEAR 2K

The Nexus 6 has a 5.96in screen screen. But we're calling it 6 inches from now on, thank you very much. Not only does that push the Nexus 6 well and truly into phablet territory, but its 2560 x 1440 2K resolution earns it a place alongside the LG G3 and Samsung Galaxy Note 4 in the 2K club. That's a very decent 493 pixels per inch, and makes for super-sharp images, even with your eyeballs hugging the display. Not that we'd recommend you do that, mind.

##### ■ RING OF LIGHT

Like the Moto X, the Nexus 6's camera is surrounded in a rather attractive circular LED ring flash. Apart from looking awesome, it could improve how evenly-lit shots are, though we'll have to wait for our final review to make a final judgement. The Nexus 6 also shares the Moto X's 13MP camera – a bump up from the 8MP

camera of last year's LG-made Nexus 5. Again, it's impossible to rate the camera performance until we compare identical test shots from different devices, so stay tuned for our final verdict.

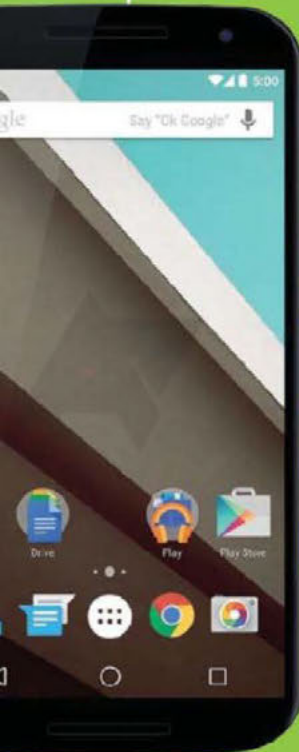
##### ■ SIMPLY SPEC-TACULAR

The Nexus 6 matches the Galaxy Note 4 spec-for-spec, making it one of the most powerful smartphones in the world. Beating beneath its curvy shell is Qualcomm's mighty Snapdragon 805 2.7GHz quad-core processor, along with 3GB of RAM and either 32GB or 64GB on onboard storage. It's a beast on paper, and we expect it to be fly in general use too, laughing in the face of multitasking and gaming. The 805 is more efficient than the 801 processor found in other devices like the LG G3 and Sony Xperia Z3, which will also help squeeze out every last drop of battery. Sadly there's no microSD slot, and the battery isn't removable either – the G3 and the Note 4 one-up the Nexus 6 in that regard.

##### ■ ASSAULT ON BATTERY

That huge screen, coupled with all of those extra pixels, is the perfect recipe for a battery disaster. Thankfully, the Nexus 6 has a large 3220mAh battery which, coupled with the more efficient processor, AMOLED screen and Android Lollipop's battery optimisations, should hopefully provide at least an all-day moderate to heavy usage experience. Hopefully.

US\$650 (\$840) / [google.com/nexus/6](http://google.com/nexus/6)



**STUFF SAYS** Until we can take a closer look at the Nexus 6, this looks like it's a draw... for now

## HERE COMES A NEW CHALLENGER

### We see where Microsoft's Windows Phone fits into the mobile equation

It's only been a few short months since Microsoft bought Nokia, and although it took over the reins while Windows Phone was arguably the closest alternative to iOS and Android, but honestly it was – and still is – quite a distant third. Judging by the recent Windows phones we've seen, it's still got a long way to go too.

However, that doesn't mean it should just give up. If anyone can take the fight to Apple and Google, it'd be Microsoft. After all, it already has the right people, resources, and branding to do the job, and now it's got the mobile expertise. It's obvious they're trying to digest and use everything Nokia has to offer too. In fact, it's going to remove the Nokia branding altogether for all future Windows phones already.

Where Microsoft can take the initiative over its rivals lies squarely on Windows 10, the equalizing factor that will make apps universal across the PC, mobile, and console. Imagine being able to do the same things in an integrated fashion across your phone, tablet, laptop, desktop, and Xbox One. It's the most comprehensive range of services you could get for all your needs: apps, games, productivity, and entertainment. Microsoft's even coming up with original TV series and content in the form of the Halo franchise.

Compare that to Apple and Google. Apple lacks a console experience, and more serious gaming isn't a factor at all since it's not a high priority for Macs. Google only has mobile devices, Chromebooks can't compare to something like the Surface Pro 3, and only Sony's Android phones can work with the Playstation 4. If done right, Windows really can take over your life.

And that's where the biggest stumbling block lies – being able to execute it properly. The success of Windows Phone relies greatly on how well Microsoft can integrate them with its other services. On their own, we haven't really seen anything that sets them apart from iPhones or Android devices yet, and the Windows Phone App store is still sorely lacking.

Can they pull it off? We'll just have to wait and see, but we're hopeful. After all, more choice and variety is always good, especially for you as consumers.





# AND THE WINNER IS...

## Apple

With its mass market appeal, strong branding, and products that are just so beautiful and easy to use, iOS narrowly claims victory. The main difference between the two is that iOS does fewer things, but does them really well. Android on the other hand, does as many things as it can with as many options as possible. Both appeal to different kinds of people, and as always, the majority wins.

But fret not, Google fanboys. Apple's won the battle, but not the war. Every Android update and handset brings significant changes, and if they can harness the power of their superior specs into something the mass market would embrace, Google could really turn things around. Having tried Google Cardboard and the Samsung Galaxy Gear VR firsthand, the realm of Virtual Reality could very well be the turning point. Until Apple decides to give it a try too, of course.





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- 12MP / 30 fps Burst
- Built-In Wi-Fi + Bluetooth\*

➤ BUILT-IN TOUCH DISPLAY



# Capture the adrenaline

The GoPro HERO4 has landed at Outdoor Sports Travel stores in Singapore

It's small, it's tough, it's powerful, and it's connected. GoPro HERO cameras are here to stay. Even with the slew of competitors out there, the action camera that spawned the category itself is still holding its ground as king of the proverbial mountain users have been shooting their extreme activities on. Three generations later, the latest HERO4 lineup of GoPro cameras has just arrived in style, packing twice the power and capabilities into the same little package.

The cameras in the new HERO4 line share some exciting new features, such as a semi-manual mode called Protune for users to adjust settings like colour, sharpness, ISO limit and exposure.

However, the most immediately useful addition is probably Quikcapture, which allows you to go straight into either image or video recording when you power on the camera, perfect for times some spontaneous action takes place.

Of course, you won't know which HERO4 suits your needs best if you don't try them out, so pop on down to Outdoor Sports Travel to give them a go.

#### Alexandra Retail Centre

460 Alexandra Road, #02-38,  
Singapore 119963

#### Sports Hub (Kallang Wave)

1 Stadium Place, #01-65,  
Singapore 397628



#### HERO4 SILVER

The first generation of GoPro cameras were used like so: check for red flashing light; point in general direction of interest; and download the videos on your computer to see them in High Definition glory. However, you now get to see what you're shooting or captured instantly, as the HERO4 SILVER comes equipped with a built-in touch display. You can now control the camera the way you've been controlling your smartphone for even greater ease of use.



#### HERO4 BLACK

Leading the new line of GoPro HERO4 cameras is the powerful BLACK edition, which is capable of shooting amazing Ultra High Definition 4K footage at 30fps. It's also gained even more speed from its predecessor, being able to capture 2.7K at 50fps and 1080p at 120fps. Stick that footage into the GoPro editor and you'll have the clearest, largest slow motion shots of your extreme efforts you've ever seen. It doesn't come with the touchscreen display on the back though.

# 6 against four

*Fanboys, ready your comments: we're going to pit Apple's bigger, better new blower against the cream of its Android rivals*



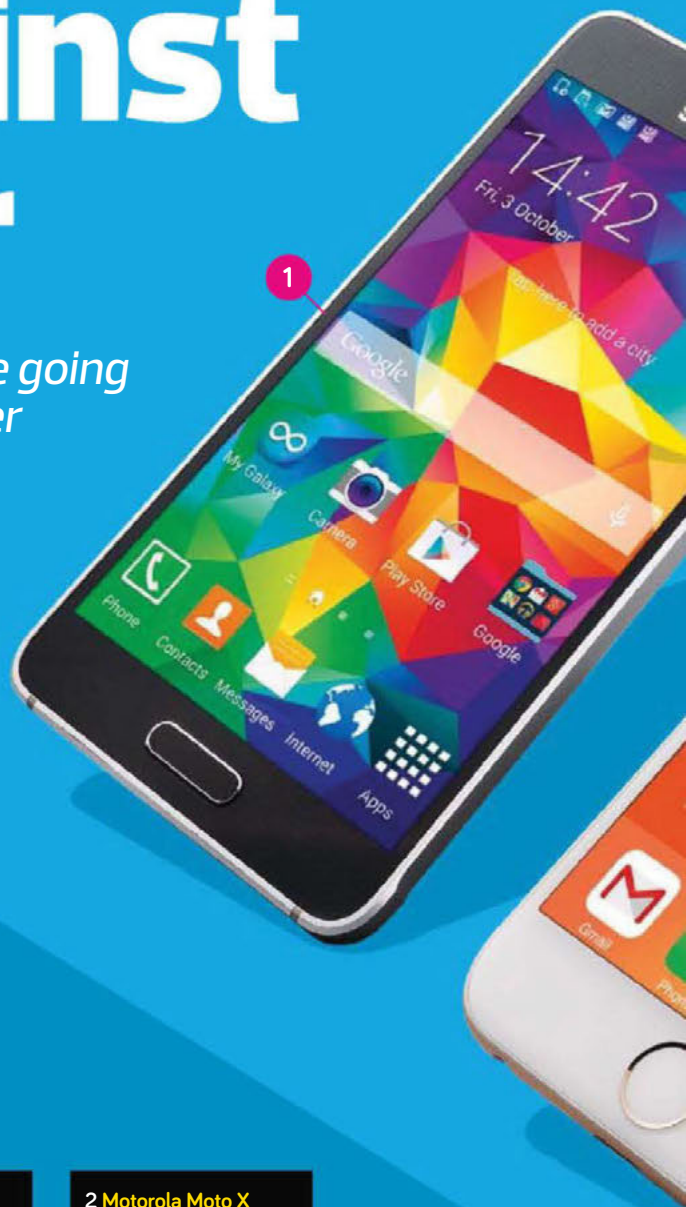
**Forget everything you think you know about which smartphone you're going to buy next. Why?**

Because everything's upside-down. This autumn's superphones have gone rogue. The iPhone is big, the Samsung is made of metal, the Motorola is futuristic and battery life is now genuinely exciting.

It's time to put aside old loyalties (we know, they were fun) and usher in some new rules. Apple is no longer the only tech giant building beautiful devices. Android isn't the only option if you want a big screen. The days of one high-end phone per manufacturer per year are over. Experience trumps specs. Price matters.

For the iPhone it used to be all or nothing. Top of the heap for years, it has languished way down below the best Androids since mid-2012. Now the iPhone 6 is right in the middle of the scrap with the rest of its new rebel smartphone rivals. Can any of them take down the LG G3?

**@sophiecharara**



**1 Samsung Galaxy Alpha**  
Samsung's new look? This is its first phone to add metal into the mix. But does it feel like a \$948 phone?

**2 Motorola Moto X**  
Motorola's plucky underdog adds serious specs to its promising formula of almost pure Android and customisable design.

**3 Apple iPhone 6**  
"Is this the small one?" Cupertino leaps to a 4.7in flagship and levels the playing field with iOS 8's new tricks and better battery life.

**4 LG G3**  
It has the power, the pixels and the reasonable price tag. Can the G3 possibly stay on top amid all this darned disruption?

**5 Sony Xperia Z3**  
Sony makes stamina sexy with the two-day Z3, its second flagship of 2014. Just bought an Xperia Z2? Look away now.





# The iPhone that could bring Android fans back to iOS

**This is the closest we've seen to Apple trying to out-Android Android... and boy, is the iPhone 6 beautiful.** For years, the iPhone was built for regular human hands and that was that. Until now.

Let's start with the 'big' 4.7in screen. It's not nearly as sharp as the G3 (or the Moto X or Z3). And a Full HD screen would be

joint-first on our tweak list. But in every other way it's top-class and the pixels really do look like they're sitting on the glass.

A bigger, Android-sized screen means a bigger, Android-sized body. But this 6.9mm-thick design with a seamless all-metal back (in gold, silver or black) and glossy front outclasses all bar the HTC One M8. It's close to flawless.

Even iOS 8 is as free and easy as Apple is likely to get. App extensions open up core functionalities to devs and widgets pop up in notifications. Elsewhere, the iPhone's already smooth performance gets another boost thanks to an A8 chip, the 8MP camera is faster and better than ever, and battery life increases slightly if

not dramatically (that's saved for the 5.5in iPhone 6 Plus).

This is still Apple. It's still the most expensive option. Then there's the friendliness of iOS, the earliest, prettiest apps, the big Apple Pay partnerships. The iPhone continues to push ahead in many areas and now it's beaten (most) Androids at their own game.

● APPLE IPHONE 6 \$988 ★★★★★



## DESIGN

### Large, light and slim

If you want the very best iPhone, you can't have a small smartphone any more. To help out upgraders from the 5 and 5s, Apple has made the iPhone 6 curvier, incredibly light at 129g and seriously slim. Maybe a bit too slim – the camera lens protrudes from the back of the phone, like the top of a tiny periscope, and we can't help lusting after a slightly chunkier iPhone with room for a bigger battery unit. Still an object to be precious about but, as ever, it's a shame to hide one in a case.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

## OS AND APPS

### Radical changes

It's all change with swappable keyboards, third-party filters in Photos and Touch ID fingerprint authentication in apps such as Amazon. Health is a neat hub for fitness data and Apple Pay (via NFC) is launching in the US.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



## CAMERA

### Lovable even in low light

This smartphone camera is so easy to love. It might only be 8MP but it's the most reliable snapper here and the fastest to open and get focus (thanks to phase detection Focus Pixels); the controls are speedy and images rarely disappointing. It's not capable of the manual heights of the Z3 but it is designed around how we take photos. The new exposure slider is genius, low-light pics look superb – better even than the G3's efforts – and auto HDR is brilliant. AF in video is almost instantaneous and slo-mo vids are now 240fps.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

## SCREEN

### Whiter than white

Retina HD is here and it's lovely. The iPhone's contrast is the best we've seen, colours are accurate and viewing angles are superb. Plus whites are as Persil-pure as the 5s. Want it sharper? The iPhone 6 Plus has a 5.5in 1080p screen.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●





When you're out snapping or bingeing on Netflix, the bigger screen does slurp up juice. There's no Ultra Power Saving so don't throw out your Lightning power pack.



Double-tap the home button to bring the top of the homescreen or app you're using further down — not exactly elegant but it does help prevent thumb fatigue.

# A true two-day superphone for snaps, games and audio

**The Xperia Z3 has an incredible battery life, the best we've encountered since last year's juice-sipping LG G2.** No more babying, no more brightness level anxiety. The 5.2in Z3 is good for one and a half to two days on a single charge.

Standby is superb, there's every level of battery-saving mode imaginable and the Z3

lasts a whopping 13 hours 55 minutes on our HD video loop test — the best result here. Stamina is also the reason Sony has stuck with a 1080p screen rather than going 2K like the G3. The screen is now 20% brighter and just as terrific at reproducing colours as the Z2.

Zero corners have been cut. The 20.7MP camera remains one

for enthusiasts with a new wide angle G lens, up to ISO 12800 in manual, and SteadyShot stabilisation for video. And overall performance is flawless, from fast downloads to running small apps smoothly.

That doesn't mean it's as lovely to live with as others here. The design has improved, with curved sides and a skinnier,

11g lighter build than the Z2, but it's still not the most ergonomic big phone.

There are little niggles here and there too: from low volume levels with headphones to Sony pushing its subscription services. But the Z3 has more specialist tricks than its rivals — hi-res audio and PS4 streaming — so it should be on every smartphone shortlist.

● SONY XPERIA Z3 \$998 ★★★★★

Sony's unobtrusive front-facing stereo speakers are clear and loud — though when game sound effects are on full blast, you'll really feel the vibrations.



At first glance this looks like the early-2014 Xperia Z2. But bezels are slimmer, port flaps refined, and the Z3 gets two new colours: copper and silver green.

## DESIGN

### No ice bag required

Slightly unwieldy phones are easier to drop so Sony has added nylon corners to help stop that beautiful glass shattering on the pavement. Plus the Z3 is now IP65/68 waterproof and dustproof, the highest rating of any smartphone.



## SCREEN

### Too blue for you?

Our only complaint is that the preset white balance is too blue. Unlike the Moto X, though, Sony lets you fiddle with temperature sliders until it suits you. X-Reality and Super-vivid modes also pump up the saturation.



## CAMERA

### Night-visionary

This takes compact-cam-beating pics when you have time to perfect them, especially in low light. It's not the fastest but it has been eating its carrots. Pics are highly detailed, with fine textures still visible when you zoom in.



## OS AND APPS

### Ahead of its time

The slick Lifelog app pairs to its new wearables and joins Walkman and Movies Unlimited apps in Sony's grown-up Android skin. The Z3 is getting in early with hi-res audio and PS4 Remote Play is coming soon. We can't wait.





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- Plug n Play

### Compatible with:



### System Requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8

300  
Mbps

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Extender

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WEBSITE

# A seriously clever, always-on 'droid made awesome by you

**It's always fun to root for the underdog and the Moto X is nothing if not a surprise champion.** No shouty features. No hype. No queues around the block. And yet, this is one of the best Androids ever made.

There's just as much to love about what Motorola has designed and refined as what it has left alone. This phone is all

about making Google's powerful services constantly available and useful. Apart from a few extremely useful, forward-thinking apps (which are helpfully bundled together) this is pretty much pure Android KitKat. You choose what to set up. And you can't get faster than this – opening apps, browsing, messaging – there's zero lag.

It's no plain Nexus, though. You could hammer a nail in with the sleek, solid aluminium build and it's the most customisable phone on the planet thanks to Moto Maker. The bright 5.2in 1080p AMOLED screen is gorgeous, with superb viewing angles, vivid colours and deep blacks. Plus Moto's Attentive Display sensors turn it off when you're not looking,

helping the 2300mAh battery to comfortably last all day long.

Is it perfect? Is anything? Its non-expandable storage maxes out at 32GB, and if photography is your top priority some rivals make more sense. But the Moto X is the first truly gorgeous, seriously-specced Android that puts you in control of your phone, and for that, it's brilliant.

● **MOTOROLA MOTO X FROM US\$500 (\$640) ★★★★★**



## CAMERA

### Considerate flasher

A huge improvement over the first Moto, this 13MP cam takes detailed shots in good light and smooth 1080p video. Both the iPhone and G3 are faster and more capable in low light – though the X's new ring flash is slightly kinder to faces.

●●●●●●●●●●

## DESIGN

### Wood is good

With plastic, leather and wood back cases (all lovely-looking) plus thousands of accent combinations, three iPhone options starts to look stingy. It's worth noting that the regular black resin model is a steal but other materials cost more. This could be the first 4.7in-plus phone smaller hands find manageable. It's perfectly balanced and buttons are easy to reach on the right-hand edge – the power button is textured so you can identify it. The microUSB and nanoSIM slots are top and bottom, leaving the tapered sides clutter-free.

●●●●●●●●●●

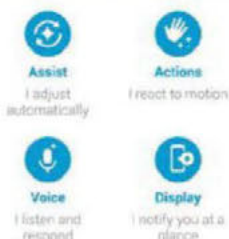
## SCREEN

### Strikes a good punch

The Moto X's display is on the punchier end of the spectrum, without looking too alien, but the downside of AMOLED colours is that from certain angles whites can look a bit yellow. It's 424ppi, so text looks seriously smooth.

●●●●●●●●●●

See what I can do.



## OS AND APPS

### Good night, dear phone

Motorola's always-on sensors, controls and software have really come into their own. Our favourite is the addictive, battery-saving Moto Display, showing hidden monochrome notifications on the lockscreen. Using IR sensors, the phone recognises when your hand approaches it and triggers up to three icons. Elsewhere, you can set up modes that can be turned on and off via natural commands such as "Good night". Speaking of voice control, it's always-on, plus "OK Google" can be swapped for any custom phrase.

●●●●●●●●●●







The Moto's sensors let you wave to silence calls and alarms and twist your wrist twice to launch the camera – ideal for keeping your eyes on the scene.

Unlike the cheaper Moto G, the X oddly doesn't have stereo speakers; but the front-facing single speaker is clear and loud enough for a bit of grime on the bus.

# Metal at last – Samsung's long-awaited design change

**powered supermodel".** This style arrives as a metal band around the Alpha and is a sign of things to come — the Note 4 has already followed suit. The flat aluminium rim makes the Alpha feel cool and hard, where previous all-plastic

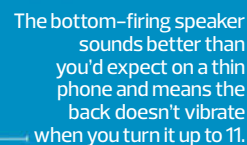
The 4.7in AMOLED display isn't the sharpest but it's bright (really very bright) with searingly vivid colours (which, thankfully, you can tone down) and brilliantly deep blacks. The home button doubles

Battery life is simply good, nothing more. The Alpha lasts a day of regular use or a respectable 10 hours on our 720p video

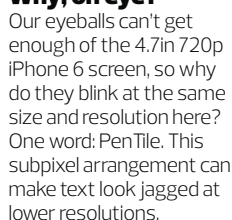
Sure, next to an iPhone 6 or Moto X, the Alpha feels a bit of a mish-mash of materials and details. But we love the smaller size and that it doesn't feel like a Samsung. In fact, it's the best evidence yet that the company can do style properly.

● SAMSUNG GALAXY ALPHA \$948 ★★★★★☆

White plastic strips on the top and bottom edges try to make sure signal and Wi-Fi aren't blocked by the metal. Just don't cover the sides and you'll be fine.



That metal band has its downsides. It means the Alpha isn't waterproof even though the cheaper S5 Mini is. But the plastic back can be removed, so swappable batteries help to ease the pain of the small 1860mAh one fitted.



Like the Galaxy S5, the Alpha's focussing and shooting speeds are so nippy your brain won't catch up until you've shot six snaps in a row. Things slow down in Picture Stabilisation mode, but it's still faster than most.

Feature fans' is still the only settings menu we're glad has its own search bar. That means feature fans know that this 'fashion phone' doesn't miss out — S Health, My Magazine and Download Booster are all worth a go.



# Still a spec sheet warrior, just not the classiest or cleverest

## The mighty G3 was the highest-specified smartphone on the planet when it arrived.

And nothing's changed. Since then the likes of the iPhone 6 and Moto X have caught up but not surpassed the LG on paper – and the G3 has even dropped in price.

Since the 2K screen on the G3 was announced, no-one but

maverick Chinese phone-maker Oppo has matched the resolution, with Sony choosing battery life over pixels. After months with the G3, would we take a 1080p screen for more than a day's battery? Probably, if the superb display tech remained and stamina could match the Xperia Z3. It's the biggest screen here at 5.5in but, unlike the iPhone

6 Plus, the expertly engineered body still feels manageable for all but the smallest of hands. It's not jaw-droppingly beautiful but it is practical.

Fast, accurate and reliable, the 13MP cam shouldn't feel ashamed that the new iPhone snaps better pics of faces in low light. It's still one of the sharpest shooters around. There's still

very little lag around Android – the Snapdragon 801 is holding up well – but the Moto X is milliseconds faster at day-to-day tasks. Is it as much of a joy to live with as sleeker, more intuitive rivals? Not quite. But the G3 remains a fantastically future-proof choice and will continue to grace our Top 10 list for some time.

● LG G3 \$848 ★★★★★

Apart from the Sony, the G3 is the only smartphone here with a microSD slot – making it an especially good deal when compared to, say, a 128GB (and \$1288) iPhone 6.



The G3, like all except the Z3, needs charging every night. Some global models come with built-in wireless charging, otherwise buy a Quick Circle case.

### DESIGN

#### We've had better

Although the overall size of the G3 is manageable with well positioned buttons, we're less enamoured with the faux metal now we've fondled both the iPhone and the Moto X's leather and wood options.



### SCREEN

#### Easy to live with

The 5.5in screen seems massive at first but you'll soon forget. Double-tap to wake becomes second nature. Sharp enough to read e-books, it has a cool, natural colour palette for movies and only the Apple has better contrast.



### CAMERA

#### Smile! Keep smiling!

The G3 takes great images in low light but using the flash on the go isn't very practical. It blinds your subjects and takes an awkwardly long time. If people move because they get bored, that makes for blurry pics.



### OS AND APPS

#### Third-party switch?

LG's Android skin has improved a lot since the G2 but it's still not our favourite. In fact, you'll be tempted to swap it. It does have some clever tricks, though, such as customising which apps show onscreen buttons.



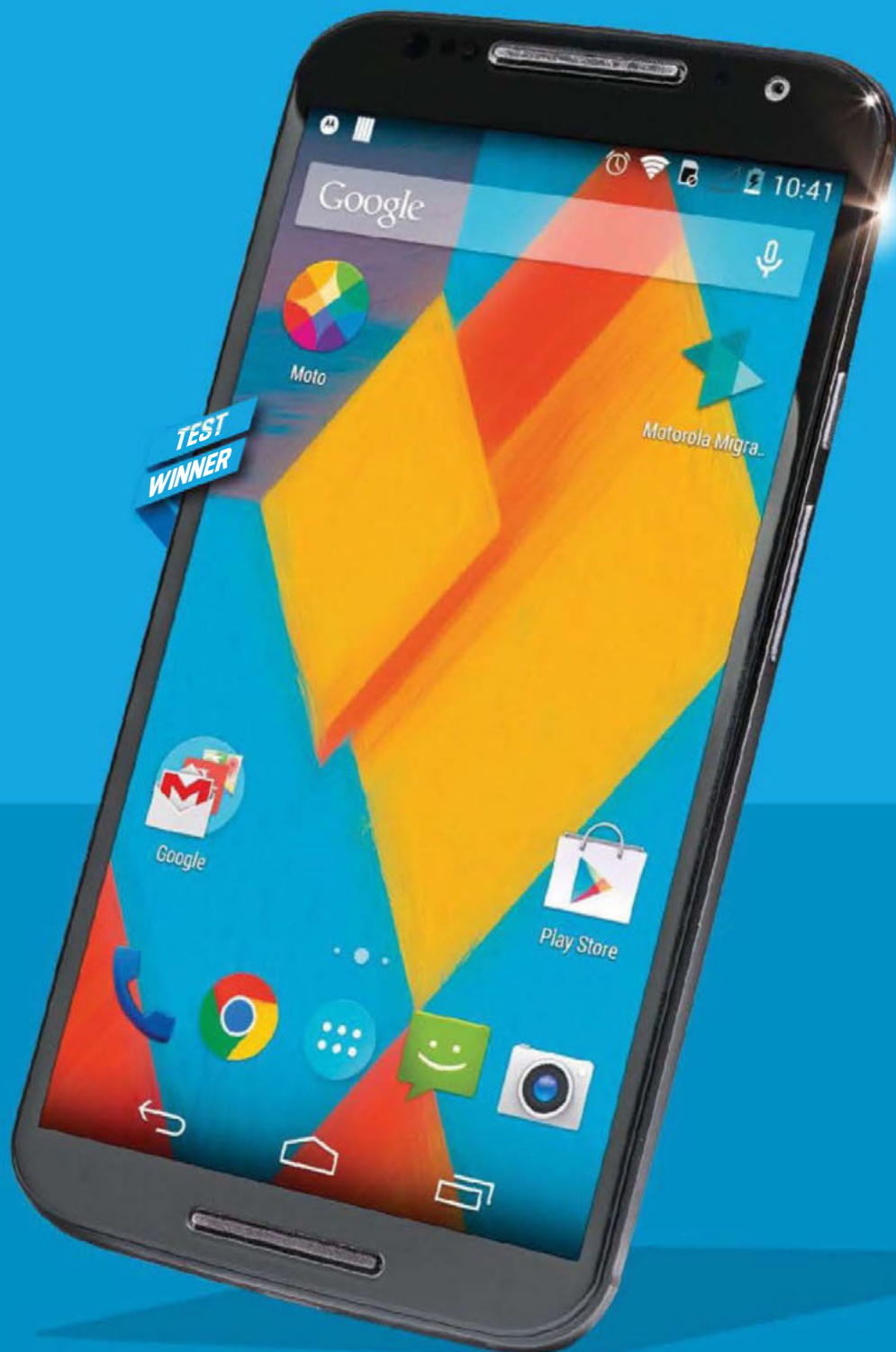
# The winner is... Motorola Moto X



**After the Moto X, you won't want to go back to any other Android.**

It's smart, it's fast and it's the kind of beautifully crafted handset you find yourself picking up for no reason whatsoever. Motorola's software works seamlessly with Android to make your life that bit easier and Moto Maker lets a mass-produced phone be personalised like never before.

App fiends might prefer an iPhone or photographers the Z3, but the Moto X feels like it's built for everyone, made even sweeter by its price. It's no budget Moto G but it is a reasonable \$640 for the 32GB model, which we'd recommend, and cheaper than the iPhone on a typical contract. Who could say no to that?



## + Now add these



### Moto 360 smartwatch

The smartwatch still strapped to our wrists has just had an update and now lasts a full day with the ambient screen on. Pair with the X and you can turn off passwords when the 360 is in range.

**US\$250 (\$320)**



### Moto Hint

One to save up for, the first genuinely desirable Bluetooth earbud – yes, you read that correctly – can be customised to match your Moto X and takes voice control to futuristic new levels.

**Stba**



### Motorola Turbo Charger

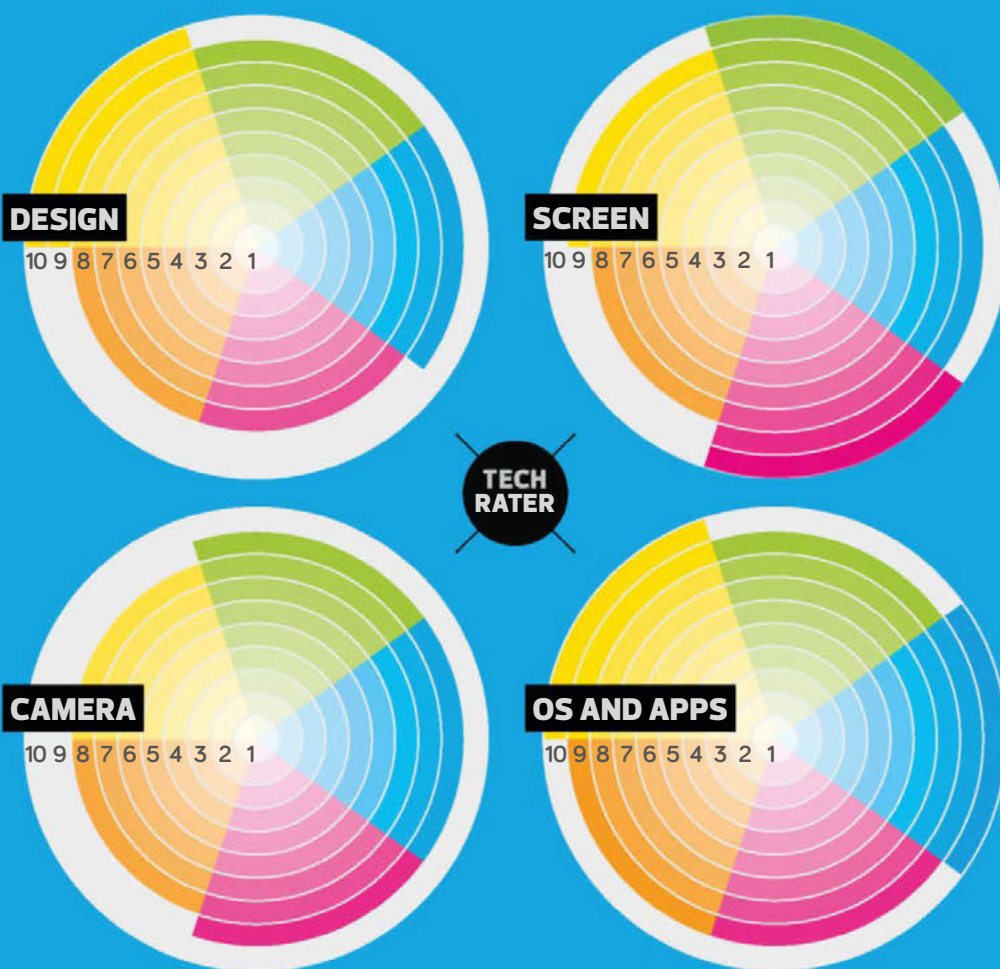
This wall charger promises eight hours of battery after just 15 minutes charging a nearly-dead Moto X via Qualcomm's QuickCharge 2.0 tech. Perfect for airports.

**US\$35 (\$45)**



# THE SUMMARY

● Moto X ● G3 ○ iPhone 6 ● Xperia Z3 ● Galaxy Alpha



## WHAT'S NEXT?






We might have tested nearly all of the finest handset hardware for the year but the best is still to come. Superphones like these keep getting better, with new operating systems, apps and functionality arriving a month after you buy. Many of iOS 8's neatest tricks – such as Continuity, which lets you browse seamlessly from iThing to iThing and answer phone calls on your Mac – haven't arrived yet, and Apple Pay is US-only at launch.

The Androids may see even more dramatic upgrades with the release of Android L, and thanks to its Material Design they'll look rather special. Oh, and by the time you buy a Z3 you'll be able to play PS4 games on it with PS4 Remote Play.

And there's plenty more still to come this year – the Galaxy Note 4 wasn't quite in time for this issue, but head over to Stuff.tv and you'll find an in-depth test, fresh off the keyboard.



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		Screen	Processor	Cameras	Storage	Battery	Dimensions	
1st		<b>Motorola Moto X</b> Since when was Motorola capable of producing a true superphone? Since now. from US\$500 (\$640) / <a href="http://motorola.com">motorola.com</a>	5.2in AMOLED, 1920x1080 (423ppi)	Quad-core Snapdragon 801 @ 2.5GHz	13MP rear, 2MP front	16GB, 32GB (non-expandable)	2300mAh	141x72x 9.9mm, 144g
2nd		<b>LG G3</b> The G3's reign at the very top may be over, but it's still a powerhouse with a superb screen. from \$848 / <a href="http://lg.com/sg">lg.com/sg</a>	5.5in IPS, 2560x1440 (534ppi)	Quad-core Snapdragon 801 @ 2.5GHz	13MP rear, 2MP front	16GB, 32GB (expandable)	3000mAh	146x75x 8.9mm, 149g
3rd		<b>Apple iPhone 6</b> This is the freshest iPhone in years, but the very best Androids still have a slight edge. from \$988 / <a href="http://apple.com/sg">apple.com/sg</a>	4.7in IPS, 1334x720 (326ppi)	Apple A8 @ 1.4GHz	8MP rear, 1.2MP front	16GB, 64GB, 128GB (non-expandable)	1810mAh	138x68x 6.9mm, 129g
4th		<b>Sony Xperia Z3</b> Sony does things differently – the Z3 could well be the connoisseur's choice. from \$998 / <a href="http://sony.com.sg">sony.com.sg</a>	5.2in IPS, 1920x1080 (424ppi)	Quad-core Snapdragon 801 @ 2.5GHz	20.7MP rear, 2.2MP front	16GB, 32GB (expandable)	3100mAh	146x72x 7.3mm, 152g
5th		<b>Samsung Galaxy Alpha</b> Samsung's answer to the S5's critics is a fine phone, but flawed in a couple of areas. from \$948 / <a href="http://samsung.com/sg">samsung.com/sg</a>	4.7in AMOLED, 1280x720 (312ppi)	Exynos 5 Octa 5430 @ 1.8GHz	12MP rear, 2.1MP front	32GB (non-expandable)	1860mAh	132x66x 6.7mm, 115g

*This is supposed to be the moment when Apple finally halts the march of the superdroids... but has it done enough?*

# Could the iPhone 6 tempt you back from Android?

When the iPhone 6 first arrived in the *Stuff* office, no less than three of my fellow Android users said the same thing: "You know, I think I could go back to iOS for this". For years I've preferred Android for the freedom to customise, the larger screens (my portly fingers type like a baby hippo learning to rollerblade), microSD slots and notification lights.

For Apple, the most important thing about an object's design is that it provokes a reaction when you pick it up, and I've seen this happen with the 6: *Stuff*'s many Android fans picking it up, feeling its featherweight presence, noting how thin it is and nodding with grudging respect. Never underestimate the importance of how one's phone sits in the trouser.

Yes, iOS is more restrictive, but it still gets a lot of the really nice apps exclusively or months before the Android versions. It's had some important low-tech tweaks (it now has a keyboard that actually works), but there's some amazing nerdy stuff in there, too – what other phone uses a barometer to register fine differences in altitude?

Oh, and some people claim it removes beards from hipsters' faces. I've always said there should be a phone with a built-in shaver.



**Yes**  
Will Dunn  
Editor



**No**  
Marc McLaren  
Stuff.tv Editor

The main reason I moved over to Android 18 months ago was the screen size: four inches just wasn't big enough. The overflowing hamper of the App Store kept me loyal to Apple for a while, as did

the fact that I also have an iPad and MacBook Pro, but increasingly I felt the irresistible pull of all those big Androids. The HTC One and One M8 eventually won me over, offering Apple-quality design with big-but-not-too-big screens and a steadily improving app selection.

But better though the Play Store is these days, it's still no App Store, and the promise of a 4.7in iPhone was enough to regain my attention. That all changed when I saw it. It's just not pretty enough.

I love my HTC One M8, with its weighty metal build and subtle design touches – such as the perfectly milled speaker grilles and the way the black antenna band runs into the rear camera. But I also love being able to easily share files across lots of different devices – not just ones made by the same company – and I love being able to have my main homescreen just carrying my five most-used apps, and I love widgets. So I'm sticking where I am, until the iPhone 7 at least.

## OR HOLD OUT FOR...



### Galaxy Note Edge

Enjoying all the flagship-level specs of the Note 4, the Note Edge puts its own curve on things with a screen that wraps around one side. Look forward to 'edgy' notifications and other slick functions.



### Nexus 6

The handset upon which Android L will be making its debut. Early reports indicate that this new Nexus has enough power to play with the best, and that it will look like a super-sized Moto X.



### Android Silver

This range of premium Android phones with strict spec and design requirements is rumoured to have been put on hold, but we're still holding our breath for its 'luxe' version of the Android experience.



### Project Ara

Due to hit the shops early in 2015, Google's modular marvel – covered in depth in our October issue – is touted as the last phone you'll ever buy. Will we be reviewing modules, not phones, next year?





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# Bigger is always better

The mother of all phablets gets its latest update and proves to Tein Hee Seow that size does matter

\$1088 / [samsung.com/sg](http://samsung.com/sg)

You would think that you'll need hands the size of Shaquille O'Neal's to enjoy this upsized smartphone. Wrong. Samsung had three years of experience from the first generation Samsung Galaxy Note to perfect its fourth phablet.

At the heart of it, this is still a phone that's as useable as its predecessors. Against all known logic, its massive 5.7in screen isn't cumbersome. And it has outdone itself with more hardware upgrades than you can imagine – an eye-popping 2K screen, insanely fast Snapdragon 805 processor and bigger than life 3220mAh battery.

Fact: Samsung knows best when it comes to phablets.



## 1 The right size

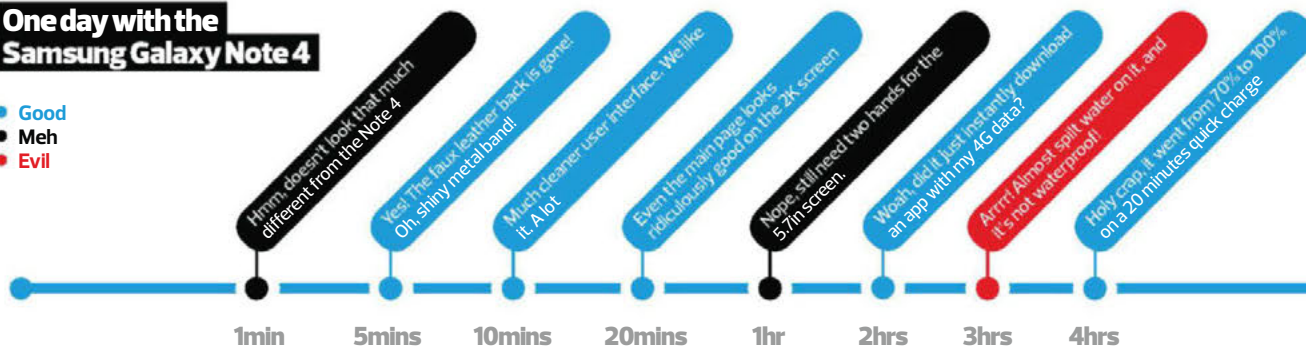
To put things into perspective, this is still a two-handed phone. Despite its larger 5.7in screen compared to the iPhone 6 Plus, the Note 4 feels much easier to handle. Its predecessor's faux leather is gone (good riddance) and the cool, shiny metal band that surrounds the phablet gives it a sturdy feel. However, even with these changes, it got a few confused looks from folks who thought we were showing them the Note 3.

## 2 A treat for the eye

Go to a Samsung Experience Store, take a good look at how the AMOLED display's rich colours and strong blacks work seamlessly with the 515ppi screen. Trust us, you won't ever want to watch HD movies on the Note 4. That's an insult to its pixel-packed 2K screen. Some might disagree with the warm hue, but we love it. Don't be surprised by the adaptive display's drastic colour change when it counters strong sunlight.

## One day with the Samsung Galaxy Note 4

- Good
- Meh
- Evil







### 3 Mightier than the sword

Hiding in the lower right corner of the phablet is its best selling point – the S Pen. Its usefulness is subjective, but a stylus user will definitely appreciate the ease of accessing shortcuts, highlighting and sending notes with a few simple taps. Year-on-year, Samsung's stylus has proved to be more efficient, sensitive, and its fourth iteration is no exception.

### 4 Keeping it steady

Take the Note 4 for a night out and capture everything in sight with its 16MP camera. By the end of the night, you'll be viewing detailed photos, even if they were captured under low light. You'll have the optical image stabilisation to thank for that. Daytime shots look less punchy in colours, but its strong low-light performance will negate that small downside.

### 5 The benchmark to follow

You'll be just as amazed as we are with the smooth performance on this monstrous device. It absolutely tears through its rivals' benchmark scores, giving 44,132 on our usual AnTuTu benchmark. Samsung's TouchWiz UI is also surprisingly more fluid and looks more at home with its simpler and flatter layout. Stutter is very minimal, and we'd like to thank the 3GB of RAM for making this possible.

### 6 Notably powerful

Did we mention it has a 3220mAh battery? And removable? Today, such features are so rare, it's like a unicorn sighting. The battery's power becomes more apparent when we spent a whole day hammering the unit, and it's still going strong with at least 20% on the meter. Heavy duty abuse gives it an uptime of 11 hours, a higher mileage than both the iPhone 6 Plus and LG G3.

## Tech specs

**Screen** 5.7in 2560 x 1440 Super AMOLED (515ppi)  
**Processor** 2.7GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 805  
**RAM** 3GB RAM **OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Camera** 16MP rear with OIS, 4K video, 3.7MP f/1.9 front **Storage** 32GB (up to 128GB microSD)  
**Battery** 3220mAh **Connectivity** Wi-Fi, 3G/4G, NFC, Bluetooth 4.1, IR **Dimensions** 153.5 x 78.6 x 8.5mm  
**Weight** 176g

## Noteworthy secrets

Unlock these secrets of the Samsung Galaxy Note 4 and you'll never want another phablet



### ■ Swipe diagonally to activate Pop Up View

Just swipe diagonally from the corner of an app, and it'll become a pop up window that can be resized.



### ■ Activate Split View via recent apps

No more complicated steps. Just go to recent apps, tap on the Split View icon on the top right of the apps' card, and start multitasking on two windows.



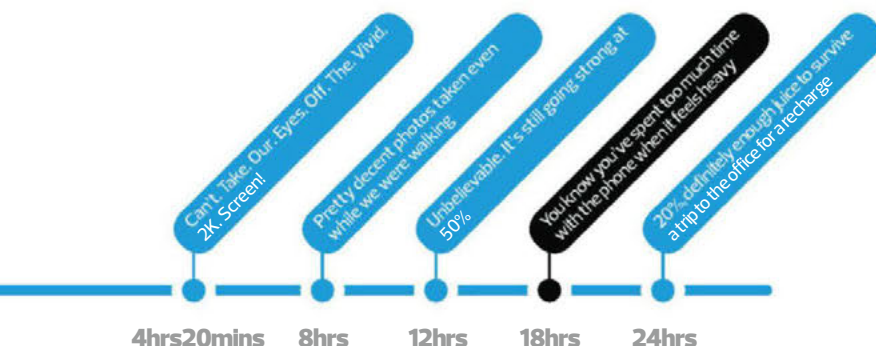
### ■ Smart Select

Take out the S Pen, click on the button and choose Smart Select. Do that, and you can copy text or images and have them sent to anyone through email or messages with a few quick taps.



### ■ S Pen as a mouse

Need to select multiple photos? Just whip out the S Pen, click on the button, drag the pen across multiple files and voila! Easy as ABC.



Unlike the iPhone 6 Plus, the Note 4 isn't an upsized version of its flagship sibling. It's packed to the brim with features, and it might seem overwhelming. But that's the point of it – it's a brand new phone, with new features waiting for you to discover and realise its full potential. @teinhee

## STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

The first phablet maker is still the best phablet maker in town, definitely the standard to follow for all future phablets

# Shield your eyes

We subject Nvidia's mighty slate to a warrior-like workout to see if it really is the best gaming tablet ever made

US\$299 (\$380) (tablet only) / [nvidia.com](http://nvidia.com)

Game how you want, where you want. That's Nvidia's tagline for its Shield Tablet, and it promises to open up a world of super-powerful on-the-go gaming thanks to the beastly Tegra K1 processor that lurks inside its shell.

Promising us an unparalleled Android and PC game-streaming experience, the Shield certainly isn't shy when selling itself. And surely, multi-tasking, app switching and of course gaming will be handled with ease thanks to that K1 processor and 2GB of RAM.

However, will it perform better than a regular Android tablet? Will it be more than snappy apps – a truly portable, no-compromise gaming experience?



## 1 Simple but solid

At first glance it looks like a giant HTC One, thanks to its rounded corners and dual front-facing speakers. But there's no metal in sight. The rear is slathered in plain black matte plastic, which looks smart (if not premium) and feels pleasantly grippy. It's reassuringly weighty to hold and doesn't creak or flex if you try to bend it.

## 2 Display of power

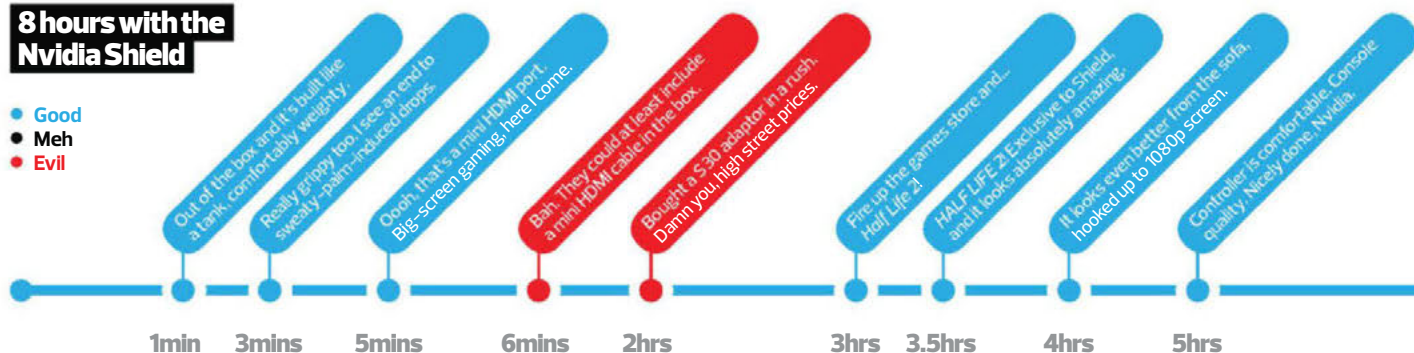
Colours on the Shield's display are well-balanced, with bright, vivid hues. The same can't be said for the contrast, however. In comparison to the iPad Air, blacks on the Shield's screen look more of a dark grey and whites look positively dark and creamy. Generally, though, the screen is still sharp and pleasant.

## 3 Gateway to the games

The Nvidia Hub is a dedicated portal to made-for-Shield games that take advantage of all that power. Combined with an HDMI cable, the Shield brings games (both its own and streamed from a gaming PC) to a TV. You can start gaming out of the box: the bright fantasy world of pre-installed adventure *Trine 2* looks fantastic on the display.

## 8 hours with the Nvidia Shield

- Good
- Meh
- Evil





#### 4 Free your gaming rig

If you're the proud owner of a PC gaming rig, you'll know that they're pretty hard to lug around. The Shield Tablet solves this issue by streaming games from your PC straight to its 8in screen. We ran *Far Cry 3* and *Saints Row IV* on it while our PC happily churned away in another room, and there was no lag. You'll need a strong Wi-Fi signal.

#### 5 The controller

Buying the Tablet and not the US\$60 (\$75) controller is like having a Ferrari without power steering. It works over Wi-Fi to reduce lag, and its quality rivals that of the Xbox One and PS4 gamepads. Everything from the triggers to the joysticks feels sturdy and grown up. Our only gripe is that it doesn't double up as a PC controller.



### Tech specs

**Screen** 8in, 1920x1200

**Processor** Nvidia Tegra K1

**RAM** 2GB

**Storage** 16GB (expandable with microSD)

**Camera** 5MP rear, 5MP front

**Battery** 5300mAh

**Dimensions** 221x126x9.2mm

### The less fast and furious bits

Yes, it's a gaming tablet, but what else goes on beyond the grunt? And what if I can't afford it?



#### ■ Game face

The 5MP camera gets decent shots in well-lit conditions, though **don't** count on cropping them. If you must, use the 5MP front-facing camera to stream your game face to your eager fans on Twitch.



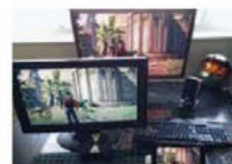
#### ■ Brush up

Dabbler, Nvidia's art app, makes use of the Shield's powerful GPU to provide fancy effects such as gravity-affected watercolour dripping. Better still is its uncanny handwriting recognition.



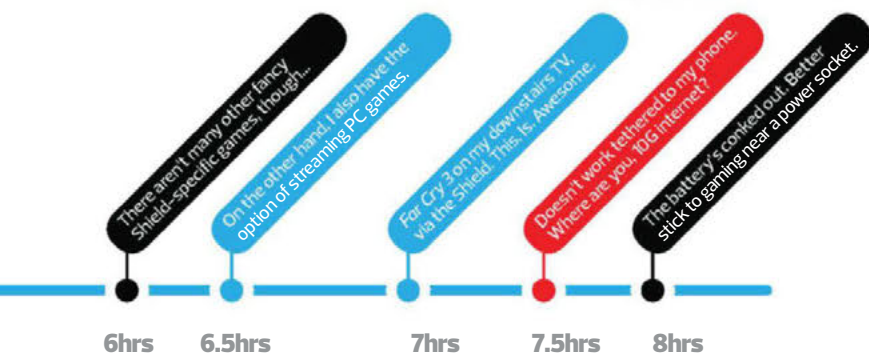
#### ■ Got it covered

The optional (but in our opinion necessary) magnetic cover doubles up as a stand. It's soft on the inside and made out of tough, durable rubber on the outside, which protects the screen well.



#### ■ The alternatives

Casual gamers who don't own a gaming PC might be better off with the cheaper PS Vita (\$299), especially if they have a PS4. An iPad Mini with Retina display can also be snapped up for \$548.



Cost and niche appeal aside, we salute Nvidia for ticking all the right tech-head boxes. The trouble is, there aren't enough made-for-Shield titles out there to warrant the cost. But if you own an Nvidia-powered battle station PC, look no further — this is the most powerful portable PC gaming experience. @EsatDedeade

### STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

Its power and gaming smarts are incredible, but the appeal is limited to serious PC gamers

# Clear as crystal

Go big, or go home – X-mini literally did that. Departing from its usual pocket-sized capsule speakers, it introduced a bigger, better and more powerful 2.1 portable audio system

■ Forget everything you know about X-mini speakers. Clearly, the bulkier form factor of the Clear speaker won't fit into your pocket or bag. While it's not too heavy to lug around, leave it on the coffee table, where it looks and feels more at home.

■ Though it's named Clear, this X-mini speaker isn't totally transparent. When you're done admiring the vibrating drivers, attach the bundled fabric grille attaches to the front. Great protection for the drivers, and doesn't dampen its performance either.

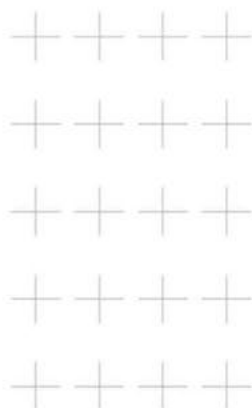
■ Controlling the Clear speaker is pretty straightforward, either from the touch panels on the top or via Bluetooth. A gentle tap on the sensitive panel is all you need to scroll through your playlist. Fair warning, too much panel tapping will turn its fine piano black gloss into a mess of prints.

■ The massive 6600mAh battery doesn't just power the portable speaker for up to 10 hours. Its USB port is a smartphone's best friend, acting as an emergency lifeline for its dying battery. That noise-cancelling microphone? Perfectly clear for hands-free calling.

■ Each driver has its own amplifier, able to power the distinct separation between the bass and treble without overpowering the vocals. It's loud enough to fill a room, ready to keep the music pumping for a small house party.

## Tech specs

**Speaker** 40mm (3.3Ω) x 2  
**Subwoofer** 70mm (4.0Ω)  
**Power** 20W **Frequency response** 40Hz – 20 kHz **Battery** 6600mAh  
**Dimensions** 218 x 89.5 x 112mm  
**Weight** 920g



## So near, yet so far

No complicated Bluetooth settings to tinker with. Tap the speaker with a phone, and let the NFC feature do all the heavy lifting. Great for Android smartphones, tough luck for iPhone users.

## Half-naked

The 2.1 speaker's innards are sorted neatly like an artwork. Its pulsating lights, along with a 70mm subwoofer that vibrates to the beat and flanked by a pair of 40mm ceramic drivers, is a sight to behold.

**STUFF SAYS** Its design is a little raw but it exudes sheer audio prowess ★★★★★

**Good effort for its first try beyond its well-known capsule speakers**

Tein Hee Seow



X-mini is the foremost expert for capsule speakers. Clearly, that expertise is delivered when we heard the speaker in action. Design-wise, its almost invisible touch panel and fingerprint smudge fest has room for improvement. Despite those shortcomings, we can't help but be attracted to this half-naked speaker.



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# App:roved

FOR  
iPHONE  
GLORY

## ● Transmit iOS

You might balk at the prospect of paying 13 bucks for a file manager app, but what an app this is. Transmit doesn't so much echo its OS X sibling as rethink it, offering remote and local server management (complete with drag and drop), document previews and editing, and iOS 8 Share Sheet compatibility, all wrapped up in one of the finest pieces of interface design to ever grace an iPhone or iPad. It's a defining app for iOS 8.

Stuff says ★★★★★  
\$12.98 / iOS

FOR  
MUSIC  
NIGGLES

## ● WhoSampled

If you've ever been listening to a track on the radio and got that nagging feeling it's pilfered a riff from elsewhere, WhoSampled is for you. On iOS for a while but new to Android, it has a massive browsable directory of artists and songs — use it to delve into who sampled and covered whom, and flick between YouTube videos to see how brazen they were. If you want to dig deeper, sign up to the WhoSampled community.

Stuff says ★★★★★  
\$3.98 / iOS; \$free / Android

FOR  
PEACE  
OF MIND

## ● 1Password

A useful but limited iOS app has just become essential, thanks to iOS 8's new powers. The result is greatly enhanced security, and the app adds further useful features such as storing multiple identities, secure notes, wallet entries and software licences. 1Password is also superior to iOS's iCloud Keychain in terms of cross-platform support and being able to edit on mobile devices. Download it now.

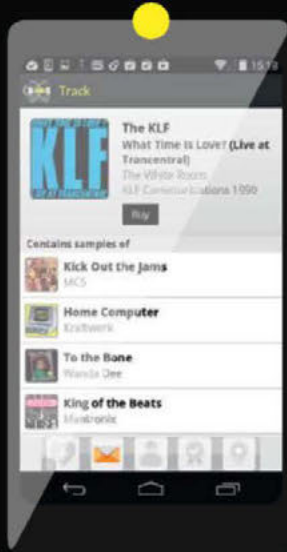
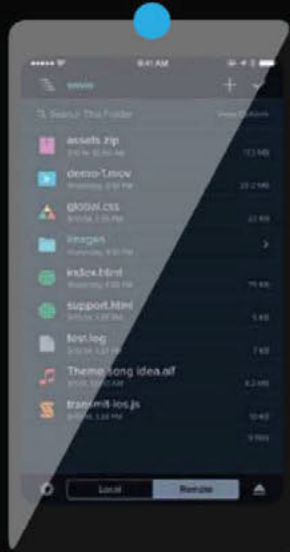
Stuff says ★★★★★  
\$free / iOS

FOR  
BEING  
SHIFTY

## ● CounterSpy

This is a sneaky side-scrolling spy-'em-up that's won our hearts with its snazzy art style and randomly generated levels. Set at the height of the Cold War, it casts you as a new spy recruit allied with neither the Soviets nor the West. Your task? To sneak into facilities and pilfer launch codes, all the while avoiding or eliminating guards. Packed with action and variety, it's one of the best games we've played in weeks.

Stuff says ★★★★★  
\$5.98 / iOS; \$6.27 / Android





# Super compact

In a world where smartphone snappers are taking increasingly better shots, can a compact camera like the PowerShot G7 X keep up?

■ Though small and lightweight, the G7 X is solidly built, with a classic design that's well laid out. The touchscreen display also flips 180 degrees for easy usage. However, there's no viewfinder, and the lack of a hot shoe also limits its potential for accessories.

■ All the G7 X's controls are conveniently placed on the right, allowing for one-handed usage. The exposure compensation dial is especially useful, but you'll still need your left hand to turn the control ring and fine tune a wide range of customisable settings.

■ For something so small, the camera sure packs a lot of punch. There's 4.2x optical zoom and close-range macro for more versatile shooting, and a DIGIC 6 processor with 31-points of autofocus means shots can be taken quite quickly for a compact.

■ Thanks to a 20.2MP back-side illuminated 1in CMOS sensor, image quality is fantastic. Sharp, clear, and full of vibrant colour, it shows there's still life for compact cameras yet. Image quality in good light is quite impressive, with a rich level of detail present.

■ The camera isn't too shabby in the dark either. Low-light shots are still quite pleasing overall without being overly noisy, and the camera manages to strike a good balance between light and dark in most situations.

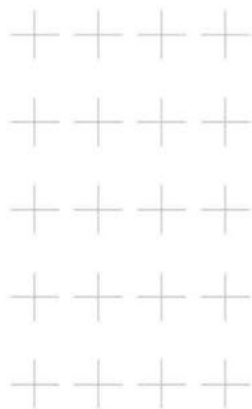
## Techspecs

**Sensor** 20.2MP 1in back-side illuminated CMOS **Lens** f/1.8–2.8 4.2x optical zoom AF points 31

**Video** 1080p@60fps ISO 125–12,800 **LCD** 3in touch enabled TFT colour **Dimensions**

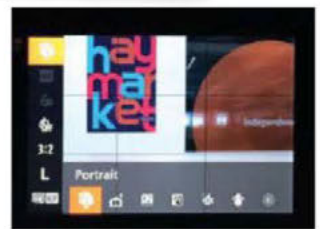
103x60.4x40.4mm, 304g

**Price** \$799 / [www.canon.com.sg](http://www.canon.com.sg)



## Because I'm App-y

Wi-Fi comes built-in, meaning you can connect your smartphone using Canon's CameraWindow app. The app then lets you shoot remotely, or simply transfer images for easy sharing.



## Beyond filters

A healthy selection of creative modes lets you achieve more with your photos, such as one dedicated to shooting stars. Panorama mode isn't one of them though, which is a shame.

**STUFF SAYS** A great all-round premium compact that's still affordable ★★★★★

**How does it compare to other premium compacts?**

Melvin Tang



Let's address the elephant in the room right away — the Canon PowerShot G7 X is better than the Sony RX100 Mark III in certain regards, but not in others. The G7 X might be more versatile than the Sony with a longer zoom, but it also loses out slightly in terms of image quality and doesn't have a viewfinder. However, it's got better value-for-money being \$400 cheaper, so it's all down to what you can afford.

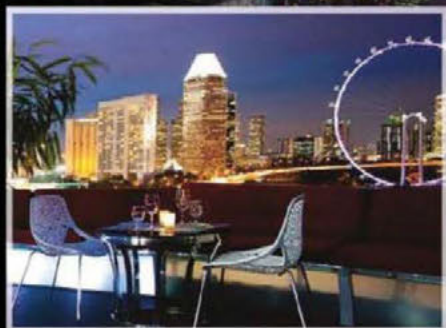




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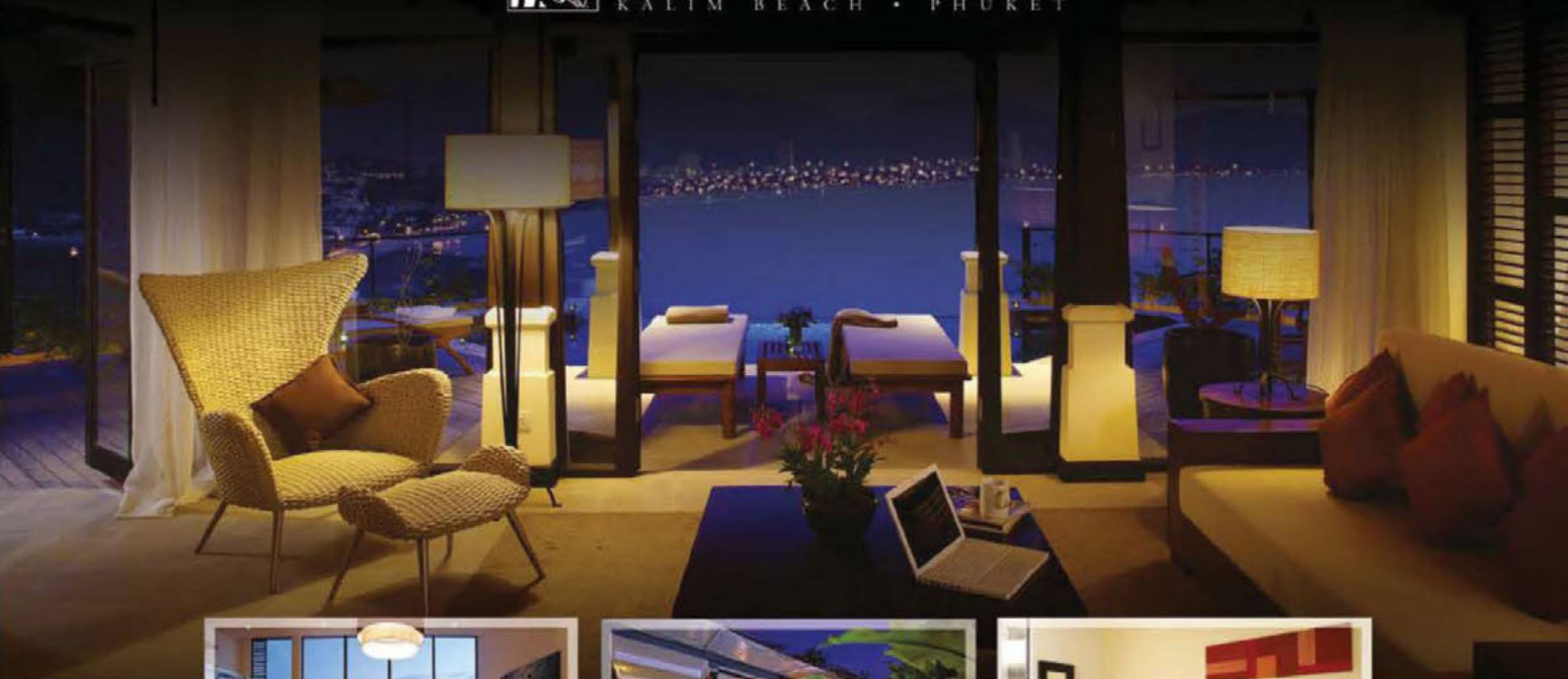






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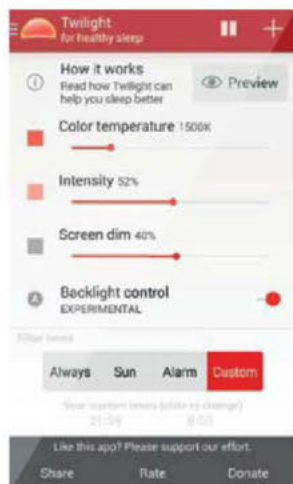
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### ● Twilight

The creators claim that blasting your retinas with the blue-white light from your smartphone screen interferes with your body's melatonin production, preventing you from getting to sleep. Twilight gradually shifts the colour temperature of your screen into the red end of the spectrum as the sun sets, making it easier on the eyes.

**Stuff says** ★★★★★

\$free / Android

# Mini meme



# WE'VE GOT SNOOZE FOR YOU

We spend a third of our lives sleeping, quite naturally. Well, that's not the *Stuff* way. Why not use tech to improve your kipping?



### ● Pzizz Sleep

This app uses a combination of neuro-linguistic programming and binaural beats – two tones of different frequencies, one played into each ear – to help you drift off. Each time you use the app the soundtrack's different, so it won't become over-familiar and you won't end up focusing on what's coming up next.

**Stuff says** ★★★★★

\$free / iOS



### ● Sleep Cycle Alarm Clock

This app turns your phone into a full-blown snooze tracker: stick it under your sheets and the app tracks your sleep patterns. As well as showing you how well you slept, it'll also let you set an alarm that wakes you during your lightest sleep phase in the morning so you'll be positively bounding out of bed.

**Stuff says** ★★★★★  
from \$1.28 / Android, iOS



### ● Rain, Rain Sleep Sounds

If you find falling water restful, this nature sounds app is the one for you. It provides you with every conceivable watery sound, from city rain to tent rain and full-blown downpours. You can also dial up other noises to help you nod off, including blizzards, crackling fire, and, oddly, home appliances. It takes all sorts.

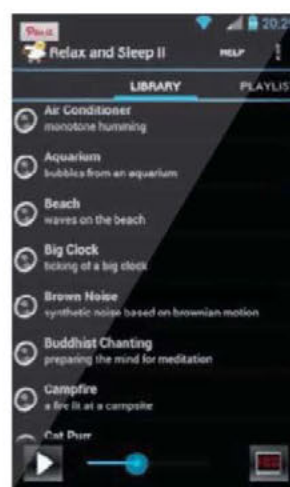
**Stuff says** ★★★★★  
\$free / iOS



### ● Deep Sleep With Andrew Johnson

There are many sleep-inducing hypnosis apps out there, but Andrew Johnson's Scots burr makes this one the most soporific of all, gently wafting you into the arms of Morpheus using breathing exercises and guided meditation. For iOS users who still can't sleep, try his Infinite Relaxation app.

**Stuff says** ★★★★★  
from \$3.98 / Android, iOS



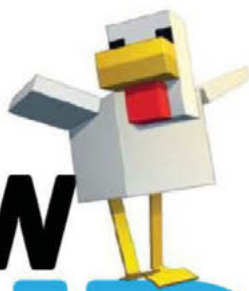
### ● Relax And Sleep II

This soundboard app lets you pick and choose from a range of relaxing noises, building up your own sleep soundscape. Some of them are obvious: summer rain, whale-song and so forth. Others are downright baffling: the combo of beating heart, creaking rocking chair and music box surely belongs in a horror film.

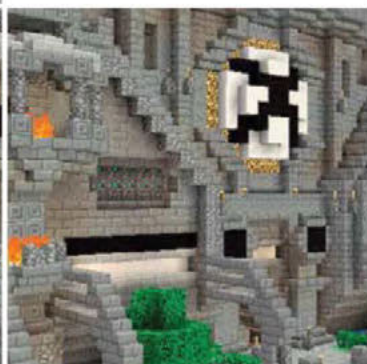
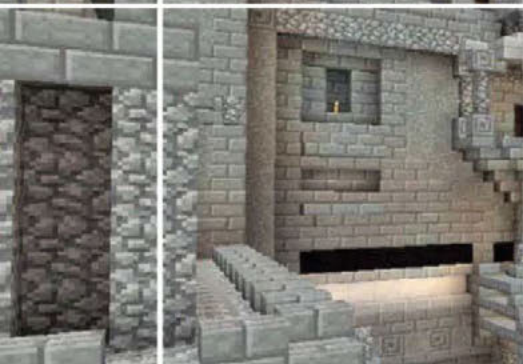
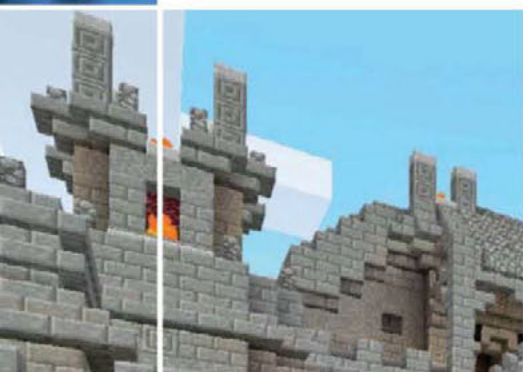
**Stuff says** ★★★★★  
from \$free / Android



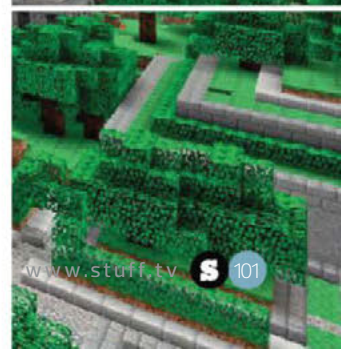
# HOW INDIE GAMES CONQUERED THE WORLD



You can keep your  
*Call Of Duty: Return  
Of The Modern  
Future War Guy 8.*  
Today's biggest  
games are being  
made in bedrooms  
all over the world



**W**hen Activision's highly anticipated space opera *Destiny* launched in September it did so under the banner of 'most expensive game ever made', with a reported budget of US\$500m (\$640m). To put that in context, 2014's most expensive film so far is *Transformers: Age Of Extinction*, with an estimated budget of US\$210m (\$270m) – casting the frontman of Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch as your lead clearly doesn't come cheap. The numbers speak for themselves: you can make two Michael Bay movies for the price of one video game. But *Destiny*'s finances pale in comparison to the US\$2.5bn (\$3.2bn) Microsoft has just spent on indie sensation *Minecraft* and its maker Mojang (Swedish for 'gadget'). All of a sudden US\$500m doesn't seem so bad... ➤







created by Swedish developer Markus 'Notch' Persson in 2009, *Minecraft* is a kind of Lego simulator set in a randomly generated world made up almost entirely of cubes. It does exactly what it says on the tin: you have to mine in order to craft. When night falls, skeletons, spiders, zombies and other nasties emerge, and without building suitable shelter you won't make it to morning.

And that's it. In its pure form, there are no missions to complete, coins to collect or princesses to save from tie-wearing apes. It's a blank canvas made up of dirt, stone, water, sand and trees. Mining them allows you to craft various tools to make mining easier, with those raw materials used to build structures, or forged in a furnace to create more advanced materials. You can do almost anything you want – and people have. Google 'best Minecraft structures' and you'll see everything from a faithful recreation of King's Landing from *Game Of Thrones* to a working computer powered by the game's redstone fuel.

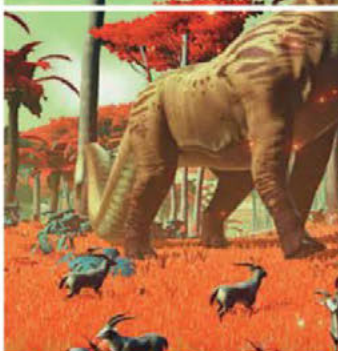
According to the *Minecraft* website nearly 17 million people have bought the PC/Mac version of the game, but with others also available for PS3, PS4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, iOS and Android (plus Persson's famously relaxed view on piracy), user numbers are way over the 100 million mark. *Minecraft* sold four million before it even came out of beta. If it were a country it'd be in the top 15 most populated places in the world. But how did it get so big?



### Dirt-cheap distribution

Ask anyone in indie gaming and they'll tell you the internet has played a huge part in its recent growth. We didn't ask just anyone, though. We asked Mike Bithell, creator of one of the most acclaimed games (indie or otherwise) in recent years, *Thomas Was Alone*. "I can make a game and for the same cost of production I can sell it to one person online – that's changed everything," Bithell says. "If 100 million people wanted to buy *Thomas Was Alone* – they didn't, but if they had wanted to – the server would have allowed it. There's no warehouse full of boxes; I'm not even running the servers that people buy it from. They're using Steam."

Launched in 2003, Steam is the iTunes of gaming, drastically changing the means of distribution. It sells everything from big-budget AAA titles such as *Middle Earth: Shadow Of Mordor* to border control simulator *Papers, Please* (see panel), made by solo developer and ex-Naughty Dog staffer Lucas Pope. "Before Steam, the upfront costs for pressing discs, printing,



**"Now it's perfectly natural to make a game about checking documents"**



shipping and inventory meant you had to make safer bets," Pope says. "Now it's perfectly natural to make a game about checking documents and not be required to justify your market before you've even found it." *Papers, Please* is proof of that. It went on to sell over 500,000 copies and win multiple 'game of the year' awards, with a PlayStation Vita version now in the pipeline.

### Money from mobile

Much of *Minecraft*'s success has come from its mobile version, *Minecraft: Pocket Edition*, available

## Ones to watch



### Volume

Inspired by making his own levels out of Lego for the original *Metal Gear Solid*, Mike Bithell's next game is a stealth puzzler that allows players to remix and share its levels.



### Super Meat Boy Forever

From his bloody console debut, SMB comes to phones and tablets in this not-quite-endless runner with fiendishly difficult, randomly generated levels.



### The Witness

It's been all quiet on the Jonathan Blow front since he launched *Braid* back in 2008 but *The Witness* – in which you explore an abandoned island – is due very soon.



### Return Of The Obra Dinn

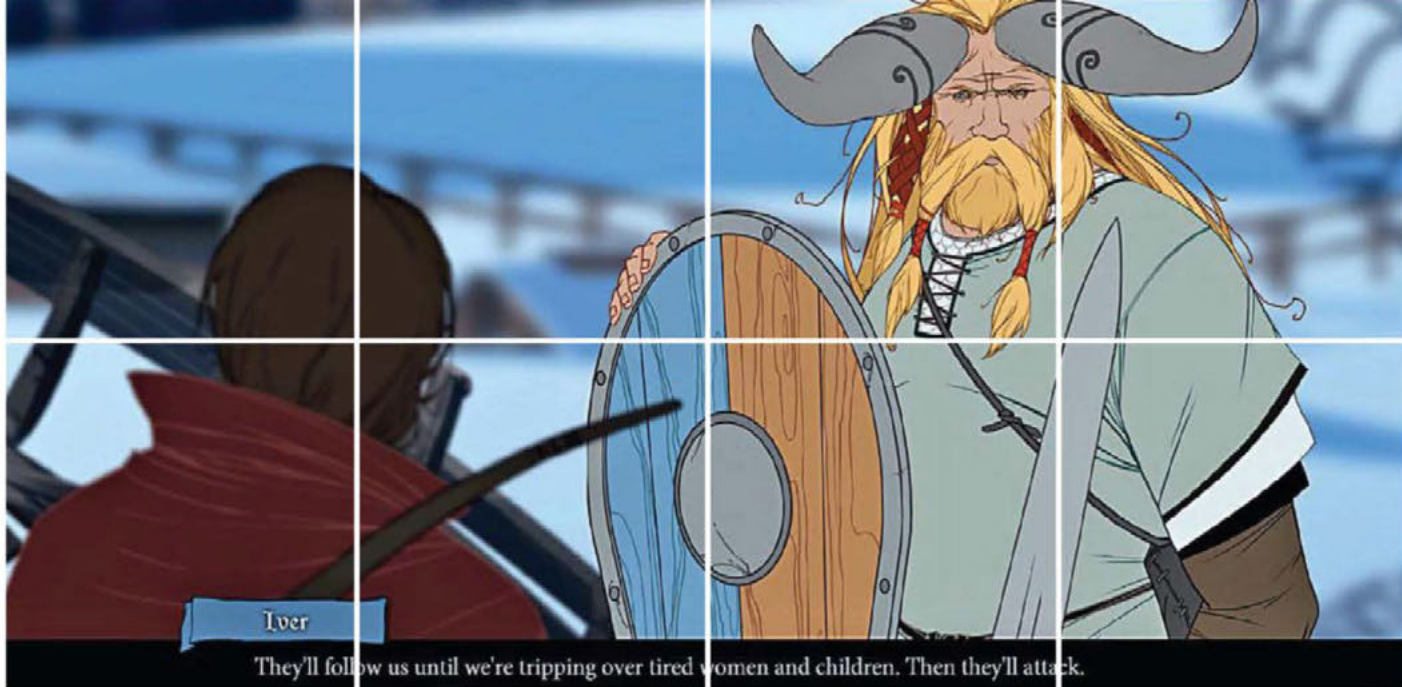
Leaving Arstotzka behind, *Papers, Please* maker Lucas Pope is working on this first-person adventure set aboard a merchant ship in 1808.



### Inside

Making its way to the Xbox One next year will be *Inside* – a side-on platformer set in a dystopian labour complex full of worker drones and enormous machinery.





for iOS and Android since 2011. In April it sold its 21-millionth copy. *Thomas Was Alone* also made its way to the iPad, while other highly praised indies such as *Limbo*, *The Walking Dead* and *The Banner Saga* have iOS and Android versions. Si Read spent 10 years making Flash versions of *New Star Soccer* before the mobile versions started making him money. At its peak, it was raking in up to £7,000 (\$14k) a day.

For US\$100 (\$130) a year, practically anyone can become an iOS developer and publish games on Apple's App Store. "Apple's decision to more or less lower the gates to all developers was a massive and hugely positive shift from the processes that ruled mobile gaming before it," says Brandon Boyer, chairman of the Independent Games Festival, which runs as part of the annual Game Developer Conference in San Francisco. "The outcome was a flood of new talent – many of whom had never considered it possible to sustainably, independently create games – creating beautiful new experiences, and a broad new audience excited to play along."

You only have to play *Device 6*, *Monument Valley* or *FTL: Faster Than Light* for proof of that in action. But just putting your game out there isn't enough. Without a

*Destiny*-sized budget for marketing, how do you get people to discover it and Microsoft to part with billions of dollars for it?

### Horde games

Since its earliest beginnings, people have talked about *Minecraft*. At the start people were just trying to work out how to play it, but as its popularity grew and players started to build bigger and better structures, communities formed. When you've created something – be it a picture, a song or an inch-perfect replica of your own bedroom – within a computer game world, you want to share it, and groups soon emerged on YouTube and Reddit for players to show off their handiwork.

Bithell explains how *Thomas Was Alone* getting picked up by a couple of prominent YouTube reviewers set it on its way: "It's massive because it can mobilise a huge audience. It's a cumulative thing. In the same way as someone gets into a genre of music, once someone is 'into' indie games that's an audience we can tap into."

That sense of community has infiltrated mainstream gaming, too, and as the influence of social media has grown it's started to work its way into the mechanics of gaming. Now every game wants you

## The 10 indie games you can't miss



### Papers, Please

Essentially an admin-'em-up, *Papers, Please* gives you the job of checking documents at the border of a Soviet-style state to ensure no illegal aliens enter the country. A surprisingly compelling and affecting experience.



### Hotline Miami

Top-down 8-bit ultraviolence: *Hotline Miami* takes *GTA: Vice City* and injects it with what must be crystal meth, because things get mental, fast. Play it before the sequel *Wrong Number* arrives with chainsaws and lots more blood.



### Fez

A clever throwback to the side-on platformers of old, *Fez* creates a 3D world in 2D graphics. You can see one of its four sides at a time, with the world rotating between them. *Fez 2* was canned when designer Phil Fish quit the industry.



### Spelunky

Like an inverted *Donkey Kong*, the aim of *Spelunky* is to venture down into its caves avoiding snakes, spiders, traps and bats while collecting treasure. But there's no princess at the end and it generates a different level layout every time.



### Limbo

A black and white platformer set in a forest on the edge of hell, *Limbo* is every bit as joyful as that makes it sound. You guide a small boy past a range of dangerous puzzles involving gigantic spiders, electrified panels and bear traps.





**"The plan has always been to allow gamers to build games on their Xbox One"**

Facebook details, from *Candy Crush* to the *The Last Of Us: Left Behind*, while *Driveclub* and *Forza Horizon 2* both push their social sides as key components of the game.

Surely that's what attracted Microsoft to *Minecraft* in the first place. It hasn't just bought a game, but a whole community. Bithell takes it a step further: "Microsoft has bought an entire generation of kids. Someone equated it to buying '90s Disney and I think that's the perfect analogy."

"I don't even think we'll see the full effect of it for 30 years. They'll sell a lot of stuff now, and when the kids today start to have families you'll see it bounce back again. It's the cyclical children's entertainment thing that we saw with things like *Transformers*. That came around again as a new generation found it."

### Console coders

Don't expect Microsoft to stop there. While it's yet to see the light of day, the plan has always been to allow standard Xbox One consoles to switch into developer mode, allowing gamers to build and test games right in their living rooms using just a PC and a consumer console. Sony is equally keen to foster indie talent: it has taken procedurally generated space explorer *No Man's Sky* under its wing, and the PS4 will be the first console to get Bithell's next game, a stealth puzzler called *Volume*.

"Both PlayStation and Microsoft are doing fantastic work in that area," says Bithell. "I think they like our games but also fewer AAA games are coming out. It has opened doors and made processes much smoother. You still have the big Christmas games hitting the consoles, and I don't think anyone's going to buy a PS4 just for *Volume*, but come March they might buy one for *Volume*, *No Man's Sky* and

five other games." And Lucas Pope agrees that Microsoft's intentions can only be good: "I'm not sure it'll make a huge difference to current developers but it's a great way to get more people creating games."

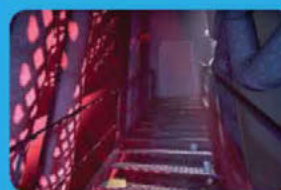
### What's indie?

So are the lines getting blurred? In the music world, indie became more about the style than the situation, with so-called indie artists signing to major labels, similar to the way *Minecraft* has 'signed to' Microsoft. What those bands produced didn't change and neither has *Minecraft*. So what does indie mean now?

"The festival actually doesn't take a very hard-line approach to the definition," Brandon Boyer tells us. "When developers submit their games, we simply ask them to tick a box to suggest that they consider themselves 'indie'."

"While the word's been co-opted to mean any number of things – an aesthetic choice, mechanical or narrative innovation, a business model – I think the most enduring definition could probably best be summed up as something created with passion, free of external constraints or outside pressure. Regardless of how the franchise evolves from here, *Minecraft* will always be remembered as one of – if not the most – successful independent games ever."

## The 10 indie games you can't miss



### The Stanley Parable

Games often take themselves far too seriously. Poking fun at all the conventions of gaming, *The Stanley Parable* makes po-faced blockbusters like *Call Of Duty* and *Destiny* seem faintly ridiculous when you return to them.



### The Walking Dead

Owing more to the comics than the hugely successful TV show, Telltale Games' *The Walking Dead* is a point-'n'-click for the iPad generation (quite literally: it's best played on a touchscreen). And it's a benchmark for spin-off games.



### Braid

This side-on platformer mixes things up with a time-shifting mechanic. Getting your head around its puzzles will make you feel a little bit of a genius. Maker Jonathan Blow's next game *The Witness* is due out this year.



### Journey

*Journey* is just that – a trip through a desert towards a mountain with a bright light at its peak. There's no shooting, punching or driving, just a walk through the sand, past ruined buildings with the mountain as your ultimate goal.



### DayZ

What began as a mod for *Arma 2* has become a game in its own right. Set on an island where the humans are unfriendly and the zombies are all too friendly, the aim is to survive by scavenging food, weapons and medicine.



# Beautiful beast

With resolutions getting higher all the time, it's no surprise TVs are getting larger too. LG's 79in stunner is one fine example

## Techspecs

**Screen** 79in 3D IPS LED

**Resolution** 4K UHD (3840x2160)

**Speakers** Harman Kardon Ultra surround 5.2 (90W) **Connectivity** 4xHDMI, 3xUSB, LAN, Wi-Fi

**Dimensions** 1773x1030x39.0mm, 60.6kg **Price** \$14,999 / lg.com/sg



■ Once you turn the TV on, you'll be amazed at just how good things look on such a large screen. Of course, it helps that the picture quality is amazing, being bright and clear with accurate, vibrant colours. Blacks are nice and deep too.

■ It's absolutely stunning with 4K source material, but it upscales full HD to 4K resolution superbly as well. Standard definition from places such as YouTube look just as they would if you were watching on a regular screen, and are actually watchable.

■ Volume on the 79UB980T is loud. 30% maximum was enough to blast through our entire office, and it was rich and clear at that. Even more impressively, you can hear speech come through really well, even in loud action sequences with music.

■ It's not just nice to watch, it's great to look at on its own. The immense screen's thin bezel helps it look absolutely gorgeous, and the speakers integrated into the stand add to its aesthetic appeal. It'll fit right in with any modern living room.

■ Besides watching videos and TV, there's a whole host of functions like built-in apps, passive 3D, and smart connectivity. The remote wand is also quite easy to control, though you can struggle for precision waving it around in the air.

**STUFF SAYS** An absolute stunner that'll ruin smaller-sized TVs for you ★★★★★

## Can smart TVs replace desktops?

Melvin Tang



At \$14,999, it's unlikely this will be a mass market hit. Rather, it's one of those marquee products for LG and buyers to show off when possible. For those who can splash the cash however, it's probably best to hook a desktop up to it rather than rely on smart features. The ease of use for smart TVs just isn't there yet, and desktops are getting smaller all the time, so there's no harm putting one on your TV console.



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# Socket rocket

The Volkswagen Golf GTE blends hot hatch performance, hybrid economy and hatchback practicality. Could this be the perfect city car?

■ The combination of a turbocharged 148bhp petrol engine and a 100bhp electric motor (which weirdly adds up to 204bhp) propels the Golf GTE, resulting in a machine that can cruise at 129km/h on battery alone and tackle longer, more spirited drives when the engine's fired up.

■ The on-board petrol engine also acts as a generator to top up the lithium-ion battery. The result is a combined range of 940km when batteries are topped up and tank is brimmed. That's Singapore to Thailand non-stop.

■ The Car-Net e-Remote smartphone app allows users to call up car information and adjust climate control remotely. Like your car toasty before you get in on a frosty morning? You've got it.

■ The engineers at VW have managed to integrate the electric motor into the housing of the six-speed DSG gearbox, meaning drivers get full control of cog swaps via some F1-inspired paddles behind the steering wheel. This really comes into play when the silent crawling traffic of urban life is left behind and a nice country road presents itself.

■ Even in electric E-Mode the GTE does a good job of nipping through traffic, as well as leaving many conventional hatchbacks in its dust at traffic lights.

## Techspecs

**Engine** 1.4-litre four-cylinder petrol, plus electric motor **Power** 204bhp combined **Torque** 350Nm **0-100km/h** 7.6sec **Top speed** 217km/h **Gearbox** 6-speed dual-clutch automatic **Fuel economy** 80km/L **Emissions** 35g/km **Weight** 1524kg **Price** Stba



## Motor roller

The electric motor turns the engine so it won't seize up due to lack of use. The battery charges from a standard socket in just over three hours, so VW reckons many drivers won't use the engine at all.



## Glow plug-in

It gets the same LED running lights, twin exhausts and alloy wheels as its hot hatch GTI brethren. But park the GTE in a dingy NCP and the interior glows with Tron-like hues.

**STUFF SAYS** Finally, a practical hybrid with an engaging drive and great looks ★★★★★

## An electric car without the fuss

Leon Poultney



The Volkswagen Golf GTE looks great, attacks corners with poise and will save you a fortune at the pumps. OK, so it isn't exactly earth-shatteringly special to look at, but that's exactly what the German marque had in mind. This car could easily replace your standard Golf, with the only complaint being a slightly smaller boot... and a distinct lack of Shell Drivers' Club points.

# The bigger Apple

Phablet apologist and reviews editor Tom Parsons takes home the biggest iPhone ever to see if he can live an extra-large Apple life

S\$1148 / [apple.com/sg](http://apple.com/sg)



## DAY 01

I've been mighty excited about the prospect of a phablet-sized iPhone. I use my phone for surfing the interwebs more than for anything else, and the iPhone 5s I've been using feels more and more cramped with the arrival of every new big-screened Android. Sure, I could have simply switched sides, but with rumours of a big iPhone persisting and the promise of Apple Continuity arriving with it, I decided to wait.

Now it's in my hands and, well, it's pretty darn big. It immediately looks bigger than a Galaxy Note 3 (a later comparison confirms this), and it actually has a bit of a Samsung look about it – the front panel doesn't quite have the luxurious appearance you expect from an iPhone.

The quality of the materials comes through when you pick it up. That front panel is clearly glass, rather than glossy plastic, and the

cool feel of the curved aluminium edges and flat back is classier than a Rolls-Royce with a nice restaurant in the back.

However, the first feel isn't entirely positive. The flat and thin design doesn't sit perfectly in the hand, and while it's possible to stretch your thumb to the other side of the screen, it involves adjusting your grip. A double-touch (not the same as a double-press) of the Home button bobs what you have open to the bottom half of the screen, but the width is an issue. And after measuring several colleagues' thumbs, mine are actually longer (6.5cm, if you're

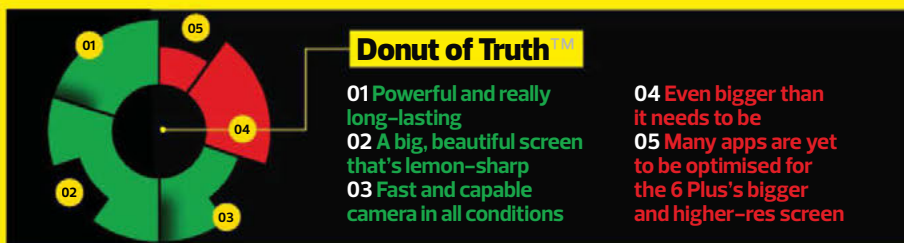
wondering) than most. But I knew sacrifices had to be made for a big and beautiful screen, and it really is. No longer does the web need to be viewed in ugly 'mobile' form – the small text of proper desktop sites is big enough to read on the 5.5in screen and the punchy 401ppi resolution keeps it crisp and luscious.

It's clear it isn't always allowed to look its best, though: many apps haven't yet been optimised for the 6 Plus's screen – it's like opening the Duplo versions of your favourite apps, and I'm pretty sure my WhatsApps can be read from half way across the office.

**"The small text of proper websites is big enough to read and punchy 401ppi resolution keeps it crisp and luscious"**







### DAY 03

When I was getting excited about going Plus-sized, I forgot the practicalities of taking it running. There is an armband available from Griffin, but it wasn't available in time so the big slab has just been out on a run in my pocket. It was fine: the extra size and weight kept it fairly well contained.

### DAY 5

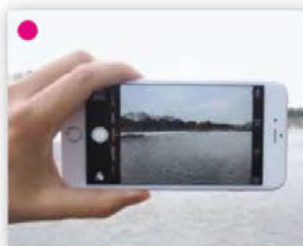
I'd usually take an iPad on a trip abroad but the 6 Plus's screen is just big enough to satisfy my in-flight entertainment needs (as well as being sharp and having a film-friendly colour balance).

### DAY 10

To my mind, as long as a phone lasts a full day, everything's just gravy. The iPhone 6 Plus comes with lashings of gravy. I hammer my phone with email, constant web surfing and around an hour of the TomTom app most days, and the 6 Plus always makes it around halfway through the following day.

### DAY 11

While it at first seemed utterly alien to use an iPhone in landscape mode, I'm now getting used to



it and the landscape-specific designs for Messages and Mail make clever use of the size and orientation. But why do the emoticon and number buttons keep switching places? My thumb's confused. But wait, Swiftkey is finally available on iOS and it's rather excellent.

### DAY 13

I've always thought that if you want to take proper photos you get a proper camera. So all I expect from a phone camera is point-and-shoot immediacy and passable results, and this is both faster and better than that, with pics turning out sharp, naturally coloured and pretty bright even in poor conditions. The 240fps slo-mo are an absolute hoot.

### DAY 14

The 6 Plus isn't for everyone. It's bigger than it needs to be and not as ergonomic as it could be. And two of its most defining features, Apple Pay and Continuity, are yet to appear. Those are flaws, but I'm prepared to accept them for the combination of that screen and an OS that's as robust and appealing as ever but more open. Still, I'm fickle... the Galaxy Note 4 could turn my head before the month is out.

## Tech

**Screen**  
5.5in IPS, 1920x1080 (401ppi)  
**Processor** Apple A8 @ 1.4GHz  
**RAM** 1GB  
**OS** iOS 8  
**Storage** 16GB/64GB/128GB  
**Battery** 2915mAh  
**Connectivity** Wi-Fi, 3G/4G, Lightning, NFC, Bluetooth  
**Dimensions** 158x78x7.1mm  
**Weight** 172g

## STUFF SAYS

Despite some imperfections, those gagging for a phablet iPhone won't be disappointed

★★★★☆



# D750

# FX

**I AM** FULL FREEDOM



Wi-Fi



TILTING SCREEN



24.3 MEGAPIXEL



EXPEED 4 ENGINE

**I AM THE NEW NIKON D750.** I am the smallest and lightest\* Nikon FX-format model. Capture stunning imagery with an impressive 24.3-megapixel image sensor, EXPEED 4 image-processing engine and the ability to shoot 1080/60p Full HD movies. Experience the flexibility and convenience of a tilting LCD monitor as well as the built-in Wi-Fi® function for hassle-free sharing. I am power on the move. [www.nikon.com.sg](http://www.nikon.com.sg)

\*Among cameras with a built-in flash and movie function.

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# THE GEEK'S GUIDE TO CHRISTMAS

*Not only have our experts combed the technosphere for 2014's best gifts, they've also come up with a bunch of Xmas tips and hacks to keep you and your new gadgets busy. Enjoy!*

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## FITNESS FREAK

### Biolite KettleCharge

The only thing weary campers find more exciting than brewing a cuppa is doing it with a gadget-charging kettle. Compatible with most backpacking stoves (including Biolite's own CampStove), the KettleCharge uses a thermoelectric generator to produce 10W of power via a USB extender as the water boils. Give it a 15-minute charge, and that'll be enough for 20 hours of music or, in a zombie uprising, five hours of panicked calls to the last safe house. Although compact, the 750ml capacity means there'll be enough water for three cups of Earl Grey. Or, if the zombies are closing in, one big, final Pot Noodle.

**US\$150 (\$190) / [beditestore.com](http://beditestore.com)**



### Polar M400

Can't decide whether to get your beloved runner a fitness band or a GPS watch? Why not give something that combines the two? The M400 takes Fitbit-style features like sleep-tracking and mashes them together with GPS tracking. They'll be so eager to run off their Christmas dinner, they'll leave you the last roast potato.

**\$289 / [polar.com/sg-en](http://polar.com/sg-en)**



### Fitbit Surge

Amidst the deluge of wearables comes the Surge from Fitbit. They've billed it as their "most advanced tracker to date", and it's not hard to see why with it packing eight sensors, seven-day battery life, a LCD touch screen, and smartphone notifications.

**\$329 / [fitbit.com](http://fitbit.com)**



### LifeStraw Go Water Bottle

OK, it's a bit too sensible for Indiana Jones' packing list, but this water filter does let its heroic owner embark on a crusade against contracting E.coli (and 99.9% of all other waterborne bacteria) during their epic backpacking trip. Just warn them to avoid snakepits and temples of doom.

**\$50 / [buylifestraw.com](http://buylifestraw.com)**



HOW TO...  
BIN THE GYM**Superhero Workout**

The maker of *Zombies, Run!* has returned with alien-fighting exercise missions that count your reps via your smartphone. No equipment needed, so bring on the lounge. **\$5.98 / iOS**

**Amped Trampoline Park**

Bouncing up and down on a trampoline looks easy, doesn't it? Try it for real at Amped Trampoline Park and you'll find it's actually a very strenuous workout. **from \$9/hour / [ampedsingapore.com](http://ampedsingapore.com)**

**Viva La Vita**

If you're someone who fancies dabbling in aerial trapeze, chessboxing or the Israeli martial art of Krav Maga, this app will show you the way. But maybe give the 'Drum & bass raverise' a miss. **\$free / iOS**

## Silva Trail Speed Elite

Winter runs are exhilarating, but the dark also makes parks feel like a terrifying level from *Limbo*. Here to reveal that, no, that tree isn't a giant spider and, yes, you are about to run into a park bench, is this versatile head-torch. It ticks all the right boxes for running: light (162g with battery), fox-startlingly bright (660 lumens with a throw of 90m) and water-resistant. It's not just for running either, with attachments for mounting it on a helmet or bike handlebars, plus there's a giant power button for those who like wearing ski gloves. Just make sure the lucky recipient turns it off before blinding the family at Christmas dinner.

**£220 (\$450) / [silva.se](http://silva.se)**

**Outdoor Tech Kodiak**

Woodsmen like Ray Mears love going off-grid, but gadget fans demand the comforting glow of power buttons wherever they are. Keep anxieties at bay with this rugged, water-resistant USB charger, which packs a generous 6000mAh battery.

**US\$50 (\$65) / [outdoortechology.com](http://outdoortechology.com)**

**Jabra Sport Pulse**

If you're going to buy someone a pair of running headphones, it might as well be a good one. The Jabra Sport Pulse doesn't just have rugged credentials and Dolby sound enhancement for great audio quality, it's got an in-ear biometric heart rate monitor too. Talk about listening to your heart.

**\$298 / [jabra.sg](http://jabra.sg)**

**Jawbone UP24**

Fitness trackers don't just have to be functional, they have to look good as well. Thankfully, the Jawbone UP24 covers both bases quite well. Besides tracking how many steps you take a day, it also helps to monitor your quality of sleep, and can be used to wake you up at the optimal time too.

**\$189 / [jawbone.com](http://jawbone.com)**

## DARKNESS DEFIERS

**GOAL ZERO TORCH 250**

Batteries intuitively know how to die when they're needed most. This 250-lumen flashlight won't let its owner down, though, thanks to a solar panel and hand-crank that'll keep the light flowing.

**€80 (\$130) / [goalzero.eu](http://goalzero.eu)**

**NITE IZE REFLECTIVE NYLON ROPE**

At every campsite there lurks at least one tent-destroying klutz who "didn't see your guy-ropes". These glowing ropes make sure even the blindly drunk avoid pop-up palaces.

**US\$12 (\$15) / [niteize.com](http://niteize.com)**

**NIKE SHIELD FLASH MAX JACKET**

Make the runner you love more visible than a giant Christmas tree. This jacket's dots give 360% reflectivity, while the water-resistant fabric is also sealed to block out wind and rain.

**£350 (\$615) / [nike.com](http://nike.com)**

**SNOW PEAK MINI HOZUKI LANTERN**

This charming camping lantern has a handy magnetic band for hanging inside tents and a silicon lampshade to help it survive tumbles. The adjustable glow is subtle and candle-like.

**US\$40 (\$50) / [snowpeak.com](http://snowpeak.com)**

## BIKE GEEK

## Rapha Rain Jacket 100

The bike nerd in your life doesn't need a whole lot of kit to enjoy a sunny day cycling with the wind at his/her back. But on rainy mornings, when every other pedal stroke brings a faceful of truck-spray... that's when investing in some decent waterproof kit pays off. Rapha is the reigning champion of making desirable bike stuff, and its newly updated, lightweight, waterproof rain jacket is the reigning champion of, er, raining. And let's face it, unfortunately it's going to be doing quite a lot of that over the next few months.

£200 (\$410) / [rapha.cc](http://rapha.cc)



## USE IT WITH...

## Patagonia zip-neck hoody

This highly breathable base layer zips and rolls when it's warm, but its hood and hand-covers roll right back again when a touch of cosy is needed.

£55 (\$110) / [patagonia.co.uk](http://patagonia.co.uk)



## Anatomy Of A Bicycle print

This smart 70cmx52cm print from cyclist and illustrator David Sparshott is both a compelling wall-smartener and a handy guide for cyclists to get to know their ferrules from their spoke nipples.

£35 (\$70) / [magnabooks.com](http://magnabooks.com)



## Fly6 light/camera

It looks like a plain rear light but, yes, it has a lens. The Fly6 records HD video and audio constantly on rides, giving its owner either a fun perspective on the peloton or a useful record of the idiot who crunched their back wheel at the traffic lights.

\$199 / [fly6.com](http://fly6.com)



## Full Windsor The Nutter

Offering more leverage than other tools for less weight, The Nutter is also rather stylish. It comes in a smart pouch made from leather and recycled tubing, and it bundles up nicely with a spare tube and a pump. It works as a bottle opener for picnics too.

\$90 / [full-windsorshop.com](http://full-windsorshop.com)

## STOCKING FILLER



## FIKS REFLECTIVE WHEEL STRIPES

There's no such thing as being too visible on the roads, and these cool additions really help your bike to stand out, especially when it's dark.

\$20 / [ridewithfiks.com](http://ridewithfiks.com)

## PERSONALISE YOUR STEED



**1** The easiest way to spruce up a bike is with some comfy new bar tape. Go modern with microtex (€20 (\$33), [fizik.com](http://fizik.com)) or traditional with durable leather (€55 (\$90), [brookseotland.com](http://brookseotland.com)).



**2** A new bottle holder is another five-minute upgrade for your steed; there are millions on offer, but we particularly like this nifty bird-shaped cage (£13 (\$26), [alwaysriding.co.uk](http://alwaysriding.co.uk)).



**3** Spokey Dokeys are frowned upon at the velodrome these days, but you can subtly tart up your wheels with some valve caps like these bullets (£4 (\$8), [chainreactioncycles.com](http://chainreactioncycles.com)).



**4** Or you could just shop for parts to customise your ride. Togoparts ([togoparts.com](http://togoparts.com)) has both an online store and an active forum where bikers buy and sell new or used parts.



SHUTTER  
NUTTERNikon  
Coolpix AW120

Any true photography geek will already have a top-notch DSLR, compact and snap-happy smartphone. But none will be much use shooting wild salmon in the freezing waters of Alaska: the DSLR will be too bulky to lug to the Katmai National Park, the compact won't be waterproof and the smartphone lacks a zoom. Enter the Nikon Coolpix AW120. It's tougher than Steven Seagal and 10 times sexier. It can survive dunks, drops and freezes and has a built-in compass and altimeter. Most importantly, its 16MP sensor serves up pin-sharp pictures and its 5x optical zoom will be handy if there are bears about.

**\$469 / [nikon.com.sg](http://nikon.com.sg)**

## USE IT WITH...

## LaCie

## Rugged Mini

Get them to store all their riskily taken shots on this tough little hard drive. It's rain-resistant, shock-resistant and pressure-resistant, and comes with between 1TB and 2TB of storage. **from \$159 / [lacie.com](http://lacie.com)**



## Foldio

Fact: you'll have more success selling tat on ebay if you take nice photos of said tat. Crazy, eh? The good news is that it's now easier than ever to give pics a pro sheen. Just buy your ebay fan a Foldio, a portable mini studio with built-in LED lights, and every shot will look like something from a catalogue.

**from US\$50 (\$65) / [orangemonkie.com](http://orangemonkie.com)**



## Joby UltraFit Sling Strap

Camera straps are uniformly evil, cutting into shoulders like a malevolent masseuse and offering little functionality. The UltraFit Sling Strap is a revelation: it's comfy enough to sleep in and users can whizz a camera from waist to face in one slick move.

**US\$25 (\$32) / [joby.com](http://joby.com)**

Lomography  
Smartphone Scanner

Everyone over the age of 30 has a drawer full of 35mm negatives lying somewhere. Imagine what might be on it: you, when you were young and fit! Your partner, when they were young and fit! Your dog, when it wasn't dead! This scanner transfers those memories from film to shiny smartphone.

**\$99 / [lomography.sg](http://lomography.sg)**

## STOCKING FILLERS



**THE GLIF** This Kickstarter-funded marvel grips a smartphone securely in its jaws then fits to a tripod to give a phone-cam the gift of steadiness. It'll work with almost any smartphone in the world and doubles as a stand. **US\$30 (\$38) / [studioneat.com](http://studioneat.com)**



**NOVA** However good the iPhone's dual-LED flash is, it'll never compete with off-camera lighting. Give shots a glow worthy of a studio set-up with the Nova flash – a dinky, Bluetooth-controlled source that comes with a free iOS app. **US\$59 (\$75) / [novaphotos.com](http://novaphotos.com)**

APPLE  
FAN

## Libratone Loop

Circles are great. They're symmetrical, lack sharp edges and are the same shape as Wagon Wheels. This rather fetching example in particular manages to do all of the above, with the added bonus of blasting out tunes with room-filling sound over AirPlay – no annoying wires or flaky Bluetooth connection required. And it's got brains to match its stylish coloured wool cover, thanks to Spotify Connect smarts for multi-room listening and higher-fidelity audio. Whether your grateful recipient mounts it on a wall, snuggles it into a bookshelf or slaps it in the middle of a room as a statement, its simple design is one that all Jony Ive fans can get behind. Or in front of, rather. It'll sound better that way.

£350 (\$715) / [shop.libratone.com](http://shop.libratone.com)

## USE IT WITH...

Spotify  
Premium

There's not much point having a sexy speaker if you haven't got Spotify Premium. Just a tenner a month will give unlimited streaming from a choice of 20 million songs. Yes, including U2. **\$10/month / [spotify.com](http://spotify.com)**



## Mophie Powerstation XL

iDevices don't have removable batteries. Diehard Apple fans will tell you that's all part of their charm, but charm won't help them when they're stranded at 3am with no way to call Uber. This huge 12,000mAh portable battery will let its owner juice two devices at once, eliminating low-battery anxiety for good.

**\$179 / [mophie.com](http://mophie.com)**



## Susan Kare icon prints

You might not recognise the name, she's behind the icons for the original Mac, and nothing will show an Apple fan's allegiance more than a wall slathered with these pixelated classics.

**from US\$100 (\$130) / [kareprints.com](http://kareprints.com)**



## Philips Fidelio ML2

Apple might have bought Beats By Dre, but you won't find an Apple-ier pair of cans than these. They plug directly into a Lightning connector and have a built-in DAC and amplifier, for higher-quality 24-bit audio than an iPhone or iPad could muster up on its own. Hear that? That's the sound of microUSB-toting Android fans weeping with envy.

**€250 (\$405) / [philips.com.sg](http://philips.com.sg)**

## HOW TO... MAKE VOICE-ACTIVATED CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

**1 Get a Belkin WeMo Switch** (\$79, [belkin.com/sg](http://belkin.com/sg)) and create an account at [ifttt.com](http://ifttt.com) – then enable the SMS and set up a 'Santa' contact for the number it provides.

**2 Plug your Christmas lights** into the WeMo Switch and enable the WeMo channel in IFTTT. Now create a recipe: 'if this SMS then turn on WeMo'.

**3 Now gather your relations**, open Siri and say: "Send a message to Santa saying turn on the Christmas lights." After a short delay, the lights should shine. Magic!







### Dodo VR Android headset

Your 'droidy friend could spend hours massacring pizza boxes, and finally crying as their Google Cardboard headset ends up looking like a kid's exhibit at the MOMA. Or they could pick up this pre-made version and strap straight into a virtual world without a single paper cut.

**US\$25 (\$32) / [dodocase.com](http://dodocase.com)**



### ZENS Qi Wireless Power Bank

Android phones were rocking NFC before it became mainstream, and they've still got an extra edge: wireless charging. They can rub it in their iFriends' faces with this portable power charger, which lets them ditch cables for good.

**€70 (\$115) / [makezens.com](http://makezens.com)**



### Moga Pro Power

The Moga Pro Power is around the same size as a regular console controller, which means it's far more comfortable to use than its dinky rivals. The built-in clip can support a hefty Android phablet while gaming, and the large internal battery can juice up a phone while its owner is head-shooting bad guys in the dentist's waiting room.

**\$90 / [mogaanywhere.com](http://mogaanywhere.com)**

### USE IT WITH...

#### Ogio Renegade RSS Backpack

Portable speaker, laptop, Android tablet — mere pockets can't fit them all. This back-hugger has dedicated soft-lined compartments, large enough to lovingly cradle a 12in tablet. Because 9.7in fruit tablets are for casuals.

**US\$150 (\$190) / [ogio.com](http://ogio.com)**



## Harman Kardon Esquire Mini

This slab of polished metal might look like a stylish mini cigar case, but it's actually a portable Bluetooth speaker. Despite its size, it'll blast out tunes at surprisingly loud volumes without sounding distorted or tinny, and it feels as solid and as premium as its price tag would suggest. A rear kickstand props it up nicely for directed sound, and it cleverly doubles up as a portable charger, letting its owner top up Android devices via an in-built USB port. A microphone transforms it into a conference call speaker, for switching from Iron Maiden to Brian from human resources at the press of a button.

**\$224 / [sg.harmankardon.com](http://sg.harmankardon.com)**



## ANDROID FAN

### HOW TO... GET STARTED WITH YOUR FIRST ANDROID PHONE

#### 1 PROTECT IT

Install and set up Google's free Android Device Manager before anything else. You can now track and lock your phone remotely if it's ever lost or stolen.

#### 2 CUSTOMISE IT

Make your phone your own by downloading a launcher like Nova, which lets you use custom icon packs to personalise it to your (excellent) taste.

#### 3 FIND TYPING NIRVANA

Android users had custom keyboards long before Apple. Get the best one for your style: SwiftKey, Swype and Fleksy are good options.



## COUNTRY HOPPER

## Knomad Mini Power

As one daydreams about watching six episodes of *Utopia* back-to-back, it's easy to forget that travelling can be stressful. Where's your passport? Did I definitely charge my tablet? Why's my hotel only got two stars on Trip Advisor? Here to help is this update to the Filofax. The Knomad Mini Power has a protective pocket for an iPad Mini or any 8in tablet, plus a phone, passport, charging cables and business cards. It also includes a slim 5000mAh battery with Lightning and microUSB connectors to keep devices charging while its owner attempts to sleep upright like a groggy flamingo.

£120 (\$245) / [knomobags.com](http://knomobags.com)



## FOR THE FLIGHT...



## Maxell Airstash

A USB stick? Not just any old USB stick – this can take SD cards and stream films or music over its own Wi-Fi to a full-to-the-brim smartphone or tablet.

\$209 / [maxell.com.sg](http://maxell.com.sg)



## Bose QuietComfort 25

Yep, they're a bit pricey, but the successors to the QuietComfort 15s are the best noise-cancellers we've tested to avoid death by droning air-con.

\$529 / [bose.com](http://bose.com)



## Reef Diamond Tail II Backpack

Compartment is what you need in a travel bag, and this water-repelling rucksack has a laptop section, a sunscreen pocket, a home for sunshades and a hidden zippered pocket on the back.

US\$84 (\$105) / [reef.com](http://reef.com)



## Satechi Smart Travel Router

There aren't many more useful boxes for a traveller. It's three things in one: a plug adapter for over 150 countries, a USB charger, and a Wi-Fi router for sharing a hotel room's internet or indulging in Chromecast-ing.

US\$45 (\$60) / [satechi.net](http://satechi.net)



## Collapsible kettle

Give your traveller the gift of knowing that tea is always on hand, with this case-friendly kettle. It's big enough for four cups and the silicone body folds down into a neat, 5.5cm-high bundle. The stainless steel base works on most heat sources.

£30 (\$60) / [wackypracticals.com](http://wackypracticals.com)



## Re-timer

If your globetrotting relative is always complaining about jet-lag, get them some sleep-tweaking specs. They get a customised sleep plan and the glasses give a UV-free glow that helps to reset the body clock. Sounds bonkers, but it's well worth a try.

US\$299 (\$380) / [re-timer.com](http://re-timer.com)

## HOW TO... BOOK A BARGAIN BREAK



The Daily Telegraph's travel expert

Donald Strachan reveals how to book a trip away from Christmas detritus and January sales...

## PICK THE BEST DATES

Christmas to New Year is one of the priciest weeks of the year. Save money by flying on Boxing Day or late on New Year's Eve. Or return on New Year's Day.

## AGGREGATE THE AGGREGATORS

Skyscanner, Kayak and Momondo trawl through airline, agency and discount ticket websites for the best fares. They all have iOS/Android apps.

## GO OFF-PISTE

There's more to Naples than pizza and Pompeii. You can make merry in its lively centre. Belgrade has bags of history and its nightlife has real swagger.



## TECH KIDS

## LeapTV

The problem with owning a games console and a child is that they always want to get involved. And as we know from experience, watching Daddy play *Alien: Isolation* for three hours is a recipe for disturbed sleep. Not to mention disturbed children. Those nice folk at Leap know all of this, which is why they've created the LeapTV: a kiddie-friendly games console that'll be the answer to your prayers. It's controllable in three ways – Kinect-style motion sensing, Wii-style controller waving and more traditional button mashing – and will launch with a catalogue of 100-odd games designed for 3–8-year-olds. Plus, they're all secretly educational. Which is more than can be said of *Alien: Isolation*.

US\$150 (\$190) / [leapfrog.com](http://leapfrog.com)



## ALTERNATIVELY...

## LeapPad 3

Buy them the latest all-conquering LeapPad and marvel at how much better your Macbook Pro's Retina display looks when it's free of sticky fingerprints.

US\$100 (\$130) / [leapfrog.com](http://leapfrog.com)



## Disney Infinity 2.0

Disney Infinity and *Skylanders* are currently battling it out for the nation's pocket money. We prefer Infinity right now thanks to the more innovative gameplay, and the irresistible Marvel tie-in sees the likes of Hulk and Iron Man join the party.

from \$109 / [infinity.disney.com](http://infinity.disney.com)



## Vans Star Wars Old Skool II Backpack

Do your kids care about *Star Wars* in the way you do? No. They prefer *Episodes I–III* and this cuts you up like a razorblade in a sausage roll. The resistance starts with this Vader/Stormtrooper alternating patterned backpack.

US\$40 (\$50) / [vans.com](http://vans.com)



## Kano

In the olden days, parents would sit down with their kids and make model aircraft. In 2014, they can build a computer together. The kit is based on a Raspberry Pi Model B and comes with a keyboard, speaker, case, OS and, crucially, colourful stickers.

£100 (\$205) / [uk.kano.me](http://uk.kano.me)

## STOCKING FILLER



## I DRAW COMICS

Most kids dream of being a superhero, but you can't help them with that. What you can do is give them this comic-illustrating masterclass.

US\$25 (\$32) / [idraw.co](http://idraw.co)

## STOCKING FILLERS



**ANIMIN** Real pets are messy and expensive, so give kids a virtual one instead. Animin uses AR tricks to bring a cutesy critter alive on your phone or tablet. £5 (\$10) / [animin.co.uk](http://animin.co.uk)



**UBOOLY** Download the app, stick in your phone and go down the pub while your child is entertained by the colourful cuddly thing. OK, not really. £15 (\$31) / [ubooly.com](http://ubooly.com)



**CRAYOLA MYPHONES** Designed for small heads and ears with a volume limiter, these can be decorated with the 40 included stickers. \$22 / [store.griffintechology.com](http://store.griffintechology.com)



**PACHI PACHI CLAPPY** What is it for? We don't know! What does it do? It claps! Why? No idea! Do we want one? Yes! Why? No idea! And so on... US\$28 (\$36) / [japantrendshop.com](http://japantrendshop.com)

ANIMAL  
LOVERTractive Motion  
Pet Activity Tracker

Does that dog really spend the whole day asleep on the sofa? Was that cat really "staying over at a friend's house" last night? Well, it had to happen: a fitness band for quadrupeds, with sensors that record movement, acceleration and ambient conditions to reveal every detail of a pet's lifestyle. There's a basic display on the lightweight collar-mounted device itself, but it's the free app (see right) that tells the whole story, and allows owners to manage daily activity targets – so they'll know exactly how many more laps of the park Daniel the spaniel has to do before he's allowed to go home and hump a table.

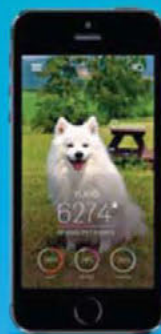
€90 (\$145) / [tractive.com](http://tractive.com)

## USE IT WITH...

## Tractive Motion

This app syncs with the tracker via Bluetooth, and can be used to monitor several animals at once – ideal if you're training a husky football team. You can even see how your pet's friskiness ranks against others worldwide.

Free /  
iOS, Android



## Super Forest Antarium

For a friend who's had it with haughty cats and dingbat dogs, we propose the most entertaining pet of all: the ant. Watch the adorable critters dig their cute little tunnels through the blue gel of this aquarium-like home. You don't even have to worry about names, as all ants are called Klaus.

£20 (\$41) /  
[thegiftandgadgetstore.com](http://thegiftandgadgetstore.com)

Hedgehog Box Cam  
System [Wireless]

Give the gift of 24-hour live hedgehog action this Christmas. This cosy 'hog home includes a black and white video cam, a wireless transmitter, and even a mic.

£250 (\$510) /  
[wildlifegadgetman.com](http://wildlifegadgetman.com)



## CatGenie

Cats are such refined and fastidious creatures. Cats that poo in other people's gardens especially. Cats that poo in your own garden, less so. Cats that poo in a box of gravel next to the washing machine, less again. This self-flushing, self-cleaning litter 'toilet' comes with everything needed to keep it running for four months. Apart from the cat.

£280 (\$570) / [catgenie.co.uk](http://catgenie.co.uk)

## GIFTS FOR THE PETS THEMSELVES

**CAT SCRATCHING DJ DECK** Cats need something to scratch because they can't operate nail scissors. DJs need something to scratch because they can't play the guitar. This product is for cats, not DJs.

£15 (\$31) / [thehut.com](http://thehut.com)



**HAMSTER RACER SET** The hamster is a creature born without dignity, so you don't have to feel guilty for laughing at the little berk as he 'drives' this exercise wheel across the floor of your living room.

£15 (\$31) / [firebox.com](http://firebox.com)





## MAD SCIENTIST

### Lego Mindstorms EV3

Lego's laying the building blocks for a new generation of hackers and programmers with the EV3 brick, the latest in its Mindstorms robotics range. The Linux-based EV3 is the first Mindstorms brick that can be programmed without a PC, adding on-brick programming, an array of sensors and Android and iOS app compatibility to this 'ready to build' robot army. The box set contains a Mindstorms EV3 brick, plus all the parts your favourite home tinkerer will need to make this Johnny-5-gone-wrong robot, a snappy mechanical snake or anything else their imagination can conjure up.

**\$630 / [lego.com](http://lego.com)**

#### USE IT WITH...

##### Ansell Hyflex Precision Gloves

Pieces of Lego are pointy and slippery, and extended construction sessions can be both painful and frustrating. Not so with these engineer's gloves, designed for the handling of small bits.

**£3 (\$8) / [ansell.com](http://ansell.com)**



##### Pure POP

Whatever people listen to while doing fiddly tasks will end up boiling their blood – old favourites eventually seem like a wood-saw on the soul. Fortunately, this DAB radio will give its owner access to a wealth of digital radio stations, from spoken word to nu-metal. And it has a massive off-switch on the top.

**from £60 (\$125) / [pure.com](http://pure.com)**



##### 3Doodler

This pen will let makers draw in three dimensions in glorious ABS plastic. It's easy to pick up, though more intricate structures like the Eiffel Tower will take practice. They could also find it handy for repairing 3D prints and sticking ABS parts together.

**\$136 / [the3doodler.com](http://the3doodler.com)**



##### Arduino Robot

This nifty little gadget puts a pair of Arduino boards on wheels: one control board and one motor board, complete with an LCD screen, IR sensor, four buttons, a speaker and a compass. It can be programmed using a computer over USB, and there are even spots for installing additional parts. It'll be trundling around and annoying the cat in no time.

**\$322 / [arduino.co](http://arduino.co)**



## HOW TO... MAKE A CHEERTREE



**1 CheerLights** (cheerlights.com) syncs the colour of Christmas lights around the world. Tweet #cheerlights with one of ten colours (eg: 'Paint the town red') and CheerLights around the planet will dutifully obey.

**2 Fancy making a 'Cheertree'?** You'll need Colour Effects Lights (\$50), an Arduino Uno board (\$35) and an IoBridge monitor (\$205). For a full list check out cheerlights.com

**3 Now head to bit.ly/cheertree** and follow the instruction video carefully. It's involved stuff, but there's no soldering – just splicing – and you'll need to follow the easy coding example.

**4 Finally, wrap your tree in lights** and get tweeting. If Santa gave you a 3D printer, print off a *Star Wars* Thermal Detonator bauble (thingiverse.com). Then hide it before your family disowns you.



## Mouse Taxidermy Kit

Anyone with a Twitter bio that doesn't end in 'taxidermist' needs to take a long, hard look at their extracurricular credentials. Here's where you come in with this surefire entry into an odd world of pop science and stitching. Plus, everybody secretly wishes they had a stuffed mouse to chat to. The process takes four hours and the kit includes tanning solution, surgical gloves, PVA glue, galvanised wire, cotton wool, Borax powder and a scalpel. Try saying the word 'scalpel' to your potential recipient to gauge how much they will enjoy mucking about with mouse blood and guts. No rodent included, so best to buy one from an ethical supplier to present the gift as a complete package.

£30 (\$60) / firebox.com



### Rudolph Reindeer Project Kit

This festive kit teaches basic electronics and produces a cheerful Christmas decoration to hang on the tree. They'll probably want to fling poor old Rudolph out of the window after the tenth tinny rendition of *Jingle Bells*, mind.

£10 (\$20) / picaxe.com



### Dremel Micro

A new Dremel with smaller, more efficient li-ion batteries. It's speed-adjustable between 5000rpm and 25,000rpm, with an LED light to illuminate the workspace and an LED fuel gauge to stop them getting caught short with a half-finished, er, thing.

US\$89 (\$115) / dremelmicro.com



### Up! Mini 3D Printer

Turn someone's home into a microfactory of the future with this dinky 3D printer. Its enclosed heat chamber helps to ensure a consistent build, making it ideal for the beginner; they'll be printing next year's stocking fillers within half an hour of unwrapping it.

US\$899 (\$1150) / up3dusa.com

## STOCKING FILLERS



### FABRICATED: THE NEW WORLD OF 3D PRINTING

This book outlines the future of 3D printing, from food to organs. The authors explain the advantages, from precise replication to building complexity. US\$16 (\$20) / waterstones.com



### BUILD A ROBOT ARM

From HAL to Skynet, we know that when we give computers too much power they'll all try to wipe us out. And now these fools have created a robot arm kit that can be connected to a PC. You maniacs! £50 (\$100) / maplin.co.uk



### BARE CONDUCTIVE ELECTRIC PAINT

A fun little gift, this conductive paint can be used to draw working circuits. It also plays nice with textiles so you can make your own wearable electronics. £18 (\$37) / bareconductive.com



### MAKEY MAKEY

This mini Arduino board turns anything an alligator clip will attach to (bananas, Play Doh, in-laws) into computer controls. Fun for testing what conducts electricity around the house. US\$50 (\$65) / makeymakey.com



## PETROL HEAD

### Pebble Watch

The open-sourceness of Pebble makes it exactly the kind of platform for which enthusiasts will create custom apps – and petrolheads are an enthusiastic bunch indeed. Pebble has weather, notifications and music control apps, but also more driver-focused apps such as PebbGPS, which repeats turn-by-turn directions on your wrist, while PebbDrive-GPS will make the watch vibrate above a preset speed. And it's not just indie developers: Mercedes-Benz's Digital DriveStyle smartphone app works with Pebble, showing tyre pressures, petrol level and range information even away from the car... as long as it is a recent Mercedes. You'll have to put that on your Christmas list too.

**\$249 / [pebble.sg](http://pebble.sg)**



#### USE IT WITH...

##### Suunto Clipper Micro Compass

Sometimes you don't need turn-by-turn instructions – having a rough compass bearing can be enough, and this one clips right onto your Pebble strap.

**\$35 / [suunto.com](http://suunto.com)**



#### Parrot Minikit Neo 2 HD

Between Siri, Cortana, Now and S Voice, there are plenty of ways to do hands-free telephony. But there's nothing sweeter than a dedicated device, and this voice-operated Parrot Bluetooth hands-free kit might be just the clip to keep them hip in their whip.

**£80 (\$165) / [parrot.com](http://parrot.com)**



#### Dent Driving Gloves

Anyone who still keeps the Drive soundtrack in their CD multichanger will get a thrill out of pulling these gloves before going for a moody late-night roll, even if the reality is that they look more like Alan Partridge than Ryan Gosling.

**£50 (\$100) / [dentsco.uk](http://dentsco.uk)**



#### Flux Capacitor Charger

This *Back To The Future*-themed in-car charger is a fitting add-on for DeLorean lovers, and it'll induce Doc Brown-esque madcap enthusiasm with its complement of 1A and 2.1A USB sockets, making it capable of charging the most power-hungry devices.

**US\$25 (\$32) / [thinkgeek.com](http://thinkgeek.com)**

#### STOCKING FILLER



#### ECTO BY JOSH LN

There's another of the DeLorean, but we like this representation of the Ecto-1 – a car that was more ridiculous, more noisy and more desirable.

**from £20 (\$41) / [firebox.com](http://firebox.com)**

## AUDIOPHILE

### Pioneer SC-1224 AV receiver

Here at *Stuff*, we believe no home is complete without a great sound system. However, to keep up with the ever-advancing trends in technology would cost an arm and a leg. Since we're not all Tony Starks – who could build awesome bionic arms and legs to replace the ones he lost anyway – we're lucky we've got AV receivers like Pioneer's SC-1224 to turn to. A 7-channel affair that pumps 200 watts of power to each channel, it's fully equipped for the 4K era, being able to both play and upscale lower-resolution sources to Ultra HD. Excellent audio quality is a given, with full lossless audio format support to ensure your high-res audio tracks are handled with aplomb.

**\$1499 / pioneer.com.sg**



#### USE IT WITH...

##### Sonos Play:1

Small but mighty, this is our favourite of Sonos's standalone units. Shame it's not portable, but when it sounds this good it's impossible to give it grief just for having a plug.

**\$349 / sonos.com**



#### Flexson VinylPlay

It's possible to hook a turntable up to a Sonos system, but not with any old turntable – it needs to have a phono stage. Flexson's VinylPlay has just that built in, plus an analogue-to-digital converter and all the cables required to plumb it into a multiroom system or a pair of powered speakers.

**£330 (\$675) / flexson.com**



#### Sony MDR-Z7

Even the best music players in the world would be useless without a good pair of cans to enjoy them with. Kind of like drinking expensive wine out of a paper cup. These were built with a 70mm HD driver to deliver only the finest sound quality, plus look and feel good while they're at it.

**\$899 / sony.com.sg**



#### FiiO X1

Practically nobody carries digital music players around anymore, given smartphones do the job just as well now. But when it comes to high-res audio, you'll still need a dedicated player to unlock its full audio potential. FiiO's X1 is amazing value at just \$159, and can play most lossless music formats too.

**\$159 / fiiocom.cn**

#### STOCKING FILLER



##### ARTVINYL

Both a storage and a display solution, this frame allows easy access to its 12in vinyl contents for showing off musical tastes.

**£40 (\$80) / artvinyl.com**

### ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS ALBUMS

#### 1 HALFORD 3

##### WINTER SONGS

Judas Priest's Rob Halford is a man with heavy metal running through his veins. So he can't help but add a metal slant to familiar Christmas songs.

#### 2 LEON REDBONE

##### CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Did you know that the voice of Leon the snowman in *Elf* is actually blues singer Leon Redbone? Oh. Did you know he had a Christmas album?

#### 3 AL GREEN

##### FEELS LIKE CHRISTMAS

So it might not be up there with *Let's Stay Together* but soul legend Al Green's cheesy '80s Christmas album is certainly, er, different.

#### 4 THE VANDALS

##### 01 TO THE WORLD

Punk band The Vandals put on a Christmas gig each year and this album contains hits such as *My First Xmas* (*As A Woman*).





## GAMER

## GTA V

We all loved Grand Theft Auto V on the PS3 and Xbox 360, playing it for hours on end to see how much of the open world we could explore. No surprise then, that it won both our Stuff Game of the Year and Readers' Choice Game of the Year awards in 2013. Now that the game has been made even better thanks to the additional horsepower afforded by next-gen consoles and PCs, we look set to immerse ourselves in it even more this time, no matter how many times we've already experienced the storyline. It's not just prettier graphics and improved environments either – Rockstar's added some new weapons, vehicles, and activities to make things interesting. If for some reason you haven't already spent many sleepless nights playing, now's as good a chance as any.

[Stba / rockstargames.com](#)



## MUM-FRIENDLY GAMES



### Kinect Sports: Rivals Xbox One

Asking your mum to use a control pad is a bit like asking a dog to mow the lawn. Stick to motion-controlled Kinect games and she'll be fine. *KS:R* isn't perfect but it's a good alternative to charades.



### Olo iPad

A cross between bowls and air hockey – even your mum can pick up *Olo* in a few mins, but it'll take her right up until New Year's Eve (and probably beyond) to master it. Prepare to wave goodbye to your iPad.



### SingStar Ultimate Party PS3, PS4

Most mums have pretty bad taste in music, making *SingStar Ultimate Party* perfect with its playlist including Coldplay and Olly Murs. At least it's got *Call Me Maybe* on it. That's a banger.



### PlayStation TV

With a telly schedule full of *The Snowman* and the Queen, the main TV can be off limits to yuletide gaming. This little box plugs into a second telly and streams games from a PS4, with support for a DualShock 4 controller. Argument averted.

[\\$149 / asia.playstation.com/sq](#)



### NES30

The original NES controller is a bonafide classic. Based on the '80s original, the NES30 gamepad has updated innards to make it compatible with almost anything running iOS, Android, Mac OS X or Windows. It even works on Wii.

[US\\$30 \(\\$38\) / nes30.com](#)



### Razer Kraken Neon

If you didn't like the Razer Kraken because you weren't a fan of that signature green colouring, there's now a full range of colours for you to choose from. They all pack the same powerful drivers as the original, with an optional retractable microphone too.

[from \\$110 / razerzone.com](#)

## STOCKING FILLERS

### PORTAL CUFFLINKS

These Aperture Science cufflinks are subtle enough to get away with. Just hope they don't turn their buttonholes into portals through space and time.

[US\\$20 \(\\$26\) / thinkgeek.com](#)



### MINECRAFT BOTTLE OPENER

This *Minecraft* pickaxe bottle opener makes sure they'll always be able to mine the raw materials for a celebratory festive season.

[US\\$12 \(\\$15\) / thinkgeek.com](#)



### NINTENDO 64 SOAPS

From when gaming was good, clean fun. They all smell the same, so there's no need to fret about the *Donkey Kong* one making them stink like an ape.

[£10 \(\\$20\) / firebox.com](#)





## COUCH POTATO

### Fargo Season 1

"What's the point of remaking *Fargo*?" everybody asked when it emerged that there was going to be a remake of *Fargo*. And who can blame everybody? The Cohens' dark-as-a-power-cut-in-a-goth-club comedy is still their best work. Rather than just stretching the same story out over 10 episodes, this TV series creates a familiar feeling using all new – albeit similarly quirky – characters rather than just retracing existing footprints. Most impressive of all, Martin Freeman might finally have shaken off the whole 'Tim from *The Office*' thing with his portrayal of Lester Nygaard.



#### True Detective

The greatest trick Matthew McConaughey ever pulled was convincing the world he wasn't a very good actor, which, if you think about it, probably makes him the best actor ever. If further proof were needed, watch *True Detective*, in which he plays Rust Cohle – an intensely bonkers cop who talks like he's swallowed a copy of *The God Delusion* and washed it down with high-end hallucinogens – partnered with troubled family man Marty Hart (Woody Harrelson) to solve an occult crime.



#### Hannibal Seasons 1 & 2

What could be more pleasant after polishing off Christmas dinner than to sit down to a show about a man who would rather eat your flesh than the big bird that took half a day to cook? Based on *Red Dragon* rather than *Silence Of The Lambs*, it sees Hannibal Lecter engaged in a psychological tug of war with Will Graham (Hugh Dancy) – the FBI agent who captured him. Scandinavian superstar Mads Mikkelsen plays Dr Lecter with menacing intensity. Best enjoyed with a nice Chianti.



#### 24: Live Another Day

24's ninth day, or 24: *LAD* as any self-respecting banter merchant might call it, is everyone's favourite torturer's long-awaited trip to London. Cue red phoneboxes, black cabs, beefeaters with AK-47s and mangy Trafalgar Square pigeons trained to carry nukes. OK, some of those might not actually appear in *LAD* but it's almost as preposterous as that. In a good way, obviously. It's a shame the real-time schtick has been ditched (the 24 hours are covered across 12 episodes) but it's good to have Jack back.



#### Black Sails

Some pirates now have jobs in IT, but not all. A good number are still sailing the high seas, getting up to no good and guzzling grog. What a life. And while you'd assume this lifestyle would take its toll on one's appearance, the *Black Sails* pirates are all preposterously good-looking, showing zero signs of scurvy. An inspiration to us all.





## Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes

Another one of those blockbusters with a brain, *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* (or *DOTPOTA*, as we're calling it) picks up where *Rise...* left off, with an army of chimps, bonobos and orangutans camped out in the woodlands beyond San Francisco, unaware that a human contingent has survived a deadly global epidemic. That is until they clash one day in the forest and a struggle for power begins. If you liked the PG Tips ads with the chimpanzees (or even the newer ones with the knitted monkey), you'll absolutely love this.



**Monty Python Live (Mostly) – One Down, Five To Go**  
The only affordable way to see Python's reunion show is to buy it on Blu-ray for somebody else and watch their copy over Christmas. Cleese, Gilliam, Palin, Idle and Jones' reunion was caught on camera, so you can see whether the Ministry of Silly Walks is still funny when performed by pensioners.



### Steven Spielberg: Director's Collection

The rules of cinema say that if they don't love at least one Spielberg film then they don't love films at all. This eight-disc set isn't just the smash hits that everyone's seen a thousand times (although *E.T.*, *Jurassic Park* and *Jaws* do make the cut) – there's also lesser-known stuff such as Steve's first theatrical release, *The Sugarland Express*, and *Duel*, his first TV feature. Shame there's a disc wasted on *Jurassic Park 2*. Perhaps they can use it as a coaster for their mulled wine.



### Transformers: Age Of Extinction

So the film's unlikely to rival *Citizen Kane*, but for the home cinema addict in your life there's one very good reason to buy the latest *Transformers* movie. It's the first with Dolby Atmos on the disc – the company's new audio tech that bounces sound off the ceiling to recreate noises coming from above. That means they'll need new upfiring speakers to add to their set-up, but chances are they've asked Father Christmas for those already.



### 20,000 Days On Earth

Born in 1957, Nick Cave recently lived his 20,000th day on earth. This is a film about all of them, but also one in particular. Shot during the recording of his latest album with the Bad Seeds, he spends the day visiting various parts of his adopted hometown of Brighton, including a psychoanalyst, an archive of his own possessions and bandmate Warren Ellis's house, where he's cooked eels for lunch. Like the man himself, the film's boundaries between truth and fiction are blurred, making it all the more compelling.



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## BINARY BARTENDER

### The Perfect Drink

There are two types of people who will appreciate an app-controlled bartending system. The first hides the smart scale away in a dark corner of the kitchen and starts preparing the most precise cocktails known to humankind while shooting furtive glances at the front door. Only the stainless steel shaker is left out in the open. The second sets up an iPad (running the free app) on the bundled stand next to an array of colourful bottles for everyone to have a go. Both benefit from gadget guidance in pouring proportioned drinks and the in-app Cabinet displaying only cocktails that can be made with the ingredients available. Both owe the legendary success of the party to you.

**US\$50 (\$65) / perfectdrinkapp.com**



#### USE IT WITH

##### Molecule R Mini Cocktail Revolution Mojito

Idiot-proof instructions include how to make foams, floating mint caviar and exploding mojito spheres.

**US\$30 (\$38) / molecule-r.com**



#### Cibi Blade Runner Glass

This is ideal for toasting Rick Deckard by glugging down whiskey in a mouth-blown Italian crystal glass tumbler. Just warn the recipient not to get too sozzled and start trying to hunt down replicants. Though we do have our suspicions in the office.

**£50 (\$100) / arnolfodicambio.com**



#### Carbonation Bottle Starter Kit

The most interesting additions to this on-the-go carbonation kit are the brew concentrates: Pale Rail and Black Hops. Simply add the 'activator' chemicals (citric acid and potassium bicarbonate) and shake for instant fizz.

**US\$50 (\$65) / patsbcb.com**



#### Coravin 1000 Wine Access system

For the relative who owns fancy wines, this clever system will let them enjoy that Chateau Pétrus 1947 without having to drink the whole bottle in one go. The needle is pushed through the cork; when it's removed, the cork reseals.

**US\$300 (\$385) / coravin.com**

#### STOCKING FILLER



##### DEATH STAR ICE MOULD

You can only freeze and dunk Han Solo so many times. At some point, the Death Star goes down with him.

**US\$10 (\$13) / thinkgeek.com**

### HOW TO... MAKE A CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL

#### 1 STERILISE A BOTTLE

Wash a glass bottle and top in hot water, then dry upside-down in an oven (120°C, fan 100°C) for 15-20 minutes. Meanwhile, put a small tumbler in the freezer.

#### 2 MAKE SPICED SYRUP

Heat 200ml water, 200g caster sugar, 12 dried allspice berries, a cinnamon stick and 2 pieces orange peel. Stir to dissolve the sugar, boil, then cool. Strain into the bottle.

#### 3 ASSEMBLE THE COCKTAIL

Fill the chilled tumbler with ice, then add 50ml brandy, 25ml homemade spiced syrup and 25ml freshly squeezed lemon juice.

#### 4 FINISH IN STYLE

Stir with a cinnamon stick. Pare a strip of orange zest, then twist over and put into the glass. Sprinkle 4-5 drops of orange bitters on top. Merry Christmas!



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PC, PS4, PS3, Xbox One,  
Xbox 360 /alienisolation.com

# Alien: Isolation

***Outlast*, *Silent Hills*, *The Evil Within* and now this from Creative Assembly: survival horror games are back. But will you get a kick out of being very, very scared?**

**T**his is the game that promises to bring primal, gut-wrenching fear back to the *Alien* universe.

You play Ripley's daughter Amanda – 15 years after the *Nostromo* and its crew went missing – searching for answers in Sevastopol, a deep space station. It's in a state of chaos, and that's not entirely the fault of the titular xenomorph stalking the hallways and air-ducts. Half the area is locked down and murderous androids wander the corridors.

This is a game of stealth. While weapons are available, your best chance of survival is to move slowly and methodically and to stay quiet. And you're rarely far from a place to hide: a locker, a cupboard or an air vent.

Sounds simple enough, but when the alien comes into play, things get really tricky... and really scary. Almost none of the creature's behaviour is scripted – it's driven by an advanced AI system that responds to sound, light and movement. This makes

it truly unpredictable, and when it's nearby you never feel safe.

It's been a long time since we played a game as intense as *Alien: Isolation*. The lighting, sound effects and music build up a gripping atmosphere of dread long before the creature makes its first appearance. This is also the first game that truly does justice to the original film. Eschewing constant action for dread and a feeling of utter powerlessness in the face of a perfect killing machine, it will

scare the pants off you. And, thanks to the game's maddening manual save system, your death could mean replaying the last 15 minutes of buttock-clenching terror. So you really, really don't want to die.

It'll also frustrate you, which won't appeal to everyone. It's not often you play a game this challenging, so it's rewarding when you finally triumph. But its intensity means it's not always enjoyable. Me? I mostly loved it. Mostly.

**Sam Kildesen**

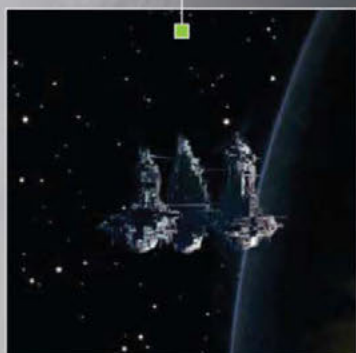
**STUFF SAYS** Fraught, involving and intense, it's the game the *Alien* series deserves ★★★★★





The game is set in Sevastopol, a decaying city orbiting a gas giant

The original cast also make an appearance in the Nostromo special edition



### Don't make a sound...

...because it turns out aliens have really good hearing. Make a noise above a whisper and, if it's lurking nearby, it'll come and investigate. And if it spots you, you're almost certainly done for. Weapons are largely ineffective; later on you can make it run away by blasting it with a flamethrower, but it'll be back and it will be angrier than before.

Thankfully, you do have a trusty motion tracker, which can be brought up at any time to check if there's anyone or anything moving about nearby. It'll show the distance and direction of the contact, giving you precious time to decide if it's worth continuing on your journey or better to cower in someone's clothes locker for the next five minutes.

However, the motion tracker annoyingly makes a noise that can be heard by your enemies. When you're in a locker with the alien inches away, bringing it up can alert it to your presence. Cue the door being ripped off the locker and you being treated to a French kiss, xenomorph-style.

Make good use of your own ears, which are often the best way to avoid the alien. This is a game where a good set of headphones can easily save your skin.





# Sensory snacks

This month's reviews of notable new watching, listening and reading matter include the words 'captivating Cumberbatch', which is a *Stuff* first

WATCH

## The Imitation Game\_cinema

**B**enedict Cumberbatch acts his pants off (not literally, you'll either be relieved or saddened to hear) in this wartime drama based on the life of Alan Turing, granddaddy of modern computing. The shadow of *Sherlock* is hard to ignore, but he's entirely convincing and a lot more likeable as the great codebreaker.

Turing's big problem is the German Naval Enigma, which he must crack amid the paranoia and prejudice of the Second World War. Naturally he's so brilliant and odd that he gets on everybody's nerves – except Keira Knightley's, because she's lovely.

As with most biopics, it's hard to fit everything in, and this one is a streamlined take on Turing's story, taking him from weirdo child

to codebreaker extraordinaire to martyr. Most of the focus is on the really cool bits, namely cracking codes and beating the Nazis. It's riveting, especially when it involves the early days of MI6.

But that doesn't leave much room for the more personal side of the story. Relationships aren't given time to develop and end up feeling a little rushed. There are some childhood flashbacks that don't seem to add much, and Turing's appalling betrayal by the country he helped save is underplayed. Still, this is worth watching for the wartime thrills and yet another captivating Cumberbatch performance.

Ced Yuen

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



## Edge Of Tomorrow\_DVD, Blu-ray

This is *Groundhog Day* re-imagined as an alien apocalypse and played out like a video game. The science is laughable and there's barely a plot, but the action is exhilarating and there's a surprising amount of wit. Not convinced yet? Then consider this: you get to see Tom Cruise die many, many times.

Ced Yuen

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



## Boyhood\_Blu-ray

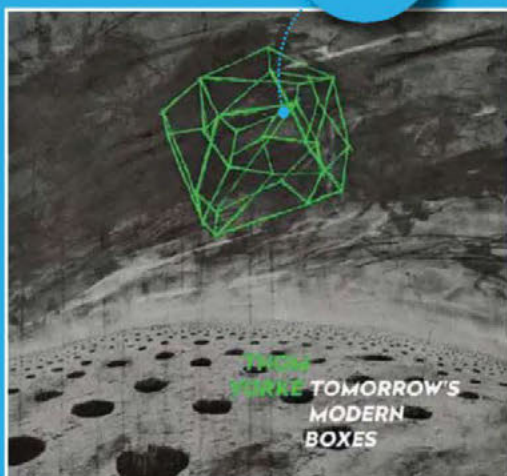
Shot over 12 years using genuinely ageing humans, Richard Linklater's tale of growing up often succeeds in feeling more like a documentary than fiction, particularly in the way the boy of the title becomes an irritating, self-righteous student by the end. You'll want to slap him. As screen representations of the passage into the adult world go, this is spot-on.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



## LISTEN



## Tomorrow's Modern Boxes

\_Thom Yorke

Uploading this without warning to BitTorrent one Friday afternoon, Yorke continues to experiment with ways to release records that don't rely on the music industry (although, unlike U2, he lets you choose whether you want them).

Like his previous solo effort, 2006's excellent *The Eraser*, this is a departure from anything Radiohead

have done since *Amnesiac*, tapping into Thom's penchant for programmed beats and trapped-in-a-machine vocals. Its triumph is adding an extra melodic sheen to what some might call Aphex Twin lite, and there are tracks here that will work their way into the extended Radiohead canon.

*Tom Wiggins*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



## Petals Have Fallen

\_Dels

In a world that's all about keeping it real, East Anglian rapper (yes, really) Dels sticks to what he knows best. Sonically the second half of a whole, *Petals Have Fallen* even starts with a vocal motif from 2011's *Gob*, but anyone sick of the guns 'n' girls nonsense of modern hip-hop could do worse than Dels' gritty poetic confessions.

*Tom Wiggins*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



## With A Little Help From My Fwends

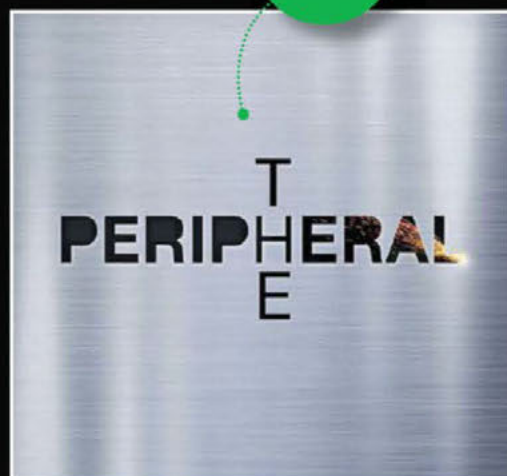
\_The Flaming Lips

A terrible, terrible remake of *St Pepper's*. Like, really terrible. But it gets two stars because the Lips deserve credit for being this fearless; and because it has both Miley Cyrus and Moby on it, and is better than anything else either of them will ever do.

*Richard Purvis*

STUFF SAYS ★★☆☆☆

## READ



## The Peripheral

\_William Gibson

The man who coined the term 'cyberspace' is back with his first novel in four years – and he's giving us not one future to explore, but two. In a near-future America, Flynne Fisher is hired to play a video game; in a far-future London, post-humans dabble in time travel; and Flynne witnesses a murder across the years.

Gibson's gift for extrapolating present trends is on full display

and the plot is one of his most complex to date, with a unique take on time travel and its consequences. His post-apocalyptic future, meanwhile, serves as a warning to us all – the great mass of humanity isn't wiped out by one catastrophic event but by slow, inexorable processes that we've already set in motion.

*Stephen Graves*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



## Check The Technique Vol 2

\_Brian Coleman

Like catnip to hip-hop nerds, the original *Check The Technique* told the inside stories of 36 seminal rap albums, including Tribe's *The Low End Theory* and Wu-Tang's *36 Chambers*. This fascinating new testament ploughs less well-known furrows, so its appeal isn't quite as broad.

*Tom Wiggins*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



## Lego Architecture

\_Philip Wilkinson

Treating Lego's architecture series like real buildings might seem over the top, but this coffee-table guide (or expensive catalogue) lets you compare the inspiration with its plastic recreation. It's a suitably high-brow approach to this most grown-up group of Lego sets – be prepared to want every one.

*Tom Wiggins*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



aquanova

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A LIFE BRANDZ CONCEPT





Stuff

# PROJECTS

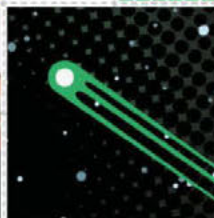
MAKE. DO. UPGRADE.



**p138**  
**HOT SHOTS:**  
**FASHION**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
It's not just about  
the clothes



**p140**  
**SUPER GEEK:**  
**ARCADE**  
**MACHINES**  
Play Pac-Man like  
it's 1987, without  
the haircuts



**p142**  
**INSTANT**  
**UPGRADES:**  
**STARGAZING**  
Warning: you  
may feel small  
and insignificant



**p144**  
**HOW TO...**  
**BE A MASTER**  
**OF HYPERLAPSE**  
Fast-forward  
reality with some  
swish time-lapses

HOT  
SHOTS

## FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

It's not just about the clothes or the models. Award-winning photographer Apple Chua shows us what's in fashion right now



## THE BASICS

**Passion and motivation.**

You have to be interested and have some basic knowledge of fashion to be successful. Passion for the subject will also shine through in your work.

**Keep up**

Fashion moves very fast, so you need to be familiar with the current trends or know what's going on in the industry so you can stay relevant. Read up whenever you can.

**Brush up on technique**

Fashion photography is a very creative pursuit, so your technical skills need to be strong. That way you'll know how to best bring out the texture of different types of fabric, or achieve the right moods.

**Knowing is half the battle**

Have an idea of what and where you'll be in 5 years, why you're doing it, and how you're going to achieve it. You also need to know which area of the fashion industry you want to be shooting, find out who's leading the industry, and why they're successful. That way you can

plan what's necessary to achieve that level of expertise and hone your skills.

**Expand your skill set**

Read up on topics like body language to help you add life to your images. You'll be surprised how many different meanings or subtle messages simple actions like crossing your arms can have.

**Build your portfolio**

Nobody will engage you without first seeing your previous work. If you're just starting out, take the chance to increase your knowledge and try everything with personal projects. This will aid you in finding out what you like or dislike, and discover the personal style that'll set you apart.

**The right equipment.**

I started out using an entry-level EOS 350D, and expanded from there. Canon's wide range of cameras and lenses made it easy for me to advance, and helped me to achieve my vision. Most of their cameras now also record HD video, allowing photographers to experiment with moving images and audition models too.

## PLANNING PROCESS

**Choose a concept**

Fashion photography is like painting on an empty canvas. You need to be creative and have a good concept so you can shape the project with your personal style. That way, you'll know what location to use, or which team members, clothes, and models to select. Remember: you're selling the clothes by reminding viewers of an emotion or lifestyle that they desire.

**Make the decisions**

You may have a team to help you, but they still have to take your lead. You have to tell them exactly what you're looking for, which requires a basic understanding of styling, hair, and makeup beforehand.

**Pick the model**

Although the model is the subject of your shoot, the emphasis must still be on the fashion — the model is there to bring out the clothes' features to their fullest. That person can't just look good either, because you want someone who can best tell the story and embody the concept. That's why it's important to meet them first, get a sense of their character, and know what they can bring to the shoot before briefing them on what you want.

**Shooting gallery**

Think about the rhythm and composition of your shoot. You can't just have all full-length photos — you'll need close-ups to emphasise details, bring out emotions, and add variety for better storytelling. A storyboard



will also help in ensuring all bases are covered so nothing is missed.

**Tried and tested**

It's not just ensuring your equipment such as lighting works. You need to see if your setups work in portraying the elements you want. For example, the choice of lighting for different colours or fabrics will differ as the model goes through outfit changes.







## START SNAPPING

### Communication is key

Be sure to let the team know exactly what it is you're after. Show them the storyboard, tell them what the story is, the motivation behind each shot, and what they'll be used for. That way everyone can work towards the same goals, and be sure to give constant feedback as the shoot progresses.

### Be positive

Always give constructive comments, as negativity will lower morale and the quality of your images. Praise keeps people motivated, and helps the subject feel confident so they can be at their best. Music can also keep energy levels high and set the right mood.

### There are no rules

Pablo Picasso said "learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist". Instead of following conventions like the rule of thirds, place the subject at the edge or introduce a significant tilt to have a dramatic effect.

### Keep it going

Take constant breaks to review what you've already captured. Once you feel you've covered the required shots for an outfit,

try some free play if you have time. Identify the elements you like and try some variations. The more shots you have to choose from the better, and you might even be pleasantly surprised by the results.

### Details, details

Pay attention to as much as you can. Even though your team members are supposed to take care of their particular areas, you're ultimately responsible for the image, so you have to be alert and ensure the model looks their best.

### Careful edits

Post processing and editing can make your images look better, but ensure you enhance the image without altering the appearance of the clothes too much. Smooth out creases, erase blemishes, and tweak settings to bring out details, but make sure things like colour stay consistent. Unless the situation calls for it, of course.

### Output matters

Keep in mind where the shot will end up. If it's for your own portfolio, there's no problem, but if it's for production, different formats will require special treatment in post. For example, matt paper will appear duller and require more saturation.

## KEEP IMPROVING

### Be inspired

Keep a library of visuals you like from your daily life so you can draw inspiration from them later. It can be anything from photos, graphic design, a scene from a movie, or a model's look in a magazine. Don't look at your phone all the time, and make the effort to admire the things around you.

### Keep moving forward

Go beyond your comfort zone and experiment with new ideas, lighting techniques, or lenses. Don't do what's already been done, or you'll just be the same as any other photographer. Always ask yourself what you're lacking, and seek advice and critiques from reliable partners and friends.

### Pick and mix

When you see something you like, don't just copy it blindly. Ask yourself why it stands out to you, and identify the specific elements that caught your attention so you can integrate it into your personal style and evolve.

### Fail better

To err is human. Mistakes are sometimes unavoidable, but you can take steps to keep from repeating them. Write them down in a notebook, and see what can be improved in the future if something similar crops up in future.



For more of Apple's work, visit [www.applechua.com](http://www.applechua.com)

## LEVEL UP WITH...

### EQUIPMENT STRAIGHT FROM APPLE'S CAMERA BAG



#### CANON EOS 5D MARK III

\$4699 (body only)

A favourite among professional photographers, this full-frame camera is so good it practically shoots by itself.



#### CANON EF 24-70MM F/2.8L II USM

\$3059

A versatile zoom lens for to add more dynamism to your shots, its wide-angles can bring you closer to the subject.



#### CANON EF 70-200MM F/2.8L II USM

\$3329

A telephoto zoom makes images flatter in terms of distance, which is great for distortion-free images.



#### CANON EF 85MM F/1.8 USM

\$619

The wide aperture makes beautiful bokeh possible, and offers fine-tuning of focus to bring out specific details.



SUPER  
GEEK

# ARCADE MACHINES

Gamer Craig Grannell explains the magnetic pull of original arcade cabinets

**T**ime was, arcades were king. Major advances like vector graphics arrived with alarming frequency, propelling the games industry onwards, new tech and control methods captivating anyone drawn to the exciting young medium.

During the late '70s and early '80s, gaming evolved incredibly quickly from the most basic of titles, spawning genres and sub-genres. Invaders from space would be shot at; you'd zoom along a beautiful vector Death Star trench, Obi-Wan's dulcet tones steadying your aim; and

the last human family would be saved by the twin-stick-wielding hero battling robotrons in 2084's dystopian world.

Before long, homogeneity infected the home games market, naturally unable to replicate the unique experience offered by each arcade cabinet, where game and controls were designed as one. So I and many others would continue to lose hours in those dark caves of blinking lights.

Today arcades cling on by their fingernails, unable to outpace home consoles. Dedicated folk, such as The Heart Of Gaming

in London, heroically keep a selection alive, but original hardware is fast becoming extinct. Surviving machines need to be played and saved, before it's too late.

As the award-winning game creator (and arcade restorer) Archer MacLean remarks: "Cheapskates might get a MAME cab with 8000 games on it, but that's like buying a kit car. It'll look OK from 100 yards away but you know it won't close up.

"If I'm going to play *Robotron: 2084*, I want the original board

set, code and especially the joysticks, because MAME cabs usually have little microswitch things you can almost wrench right off. And then there are vector games like *Asteroids*, where you need a good, bright monitor to get the full effect of the glowing lines and your bullets leaving super-white trails in the phosphor."

In other words, you don't get that by shoving a PC in a chipboard box. So here are some classic cabinets plus some tips on how to snag one for your spare room.

## COLLECTORS' TIPS

### VIEW BEFORE YOU BUY

You need to ensure a cab is in acceptable working order and has the right parts. Replacements may have been added, such as a raster rather than a vector monitor, so do your research.

### GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

Most arcade games were designed to last for a few years. Even well-cared-for cabs may need repairs, so you could need basic electronics knowledge and a canny eye for snapping up rare parts.

### THINK STORAGE

Arcade cabinets are huge, heavy and — comprising chipboard and ancient electronics — easy to damage. So don't stick it in a damp shed — keep it in a dry, heated environment.

### CHOOSE CAREFULLY

Buying, restoring and housing an arcade cab is a labour of love. They are expensive in time and cash, so choose a game you know you can play endlessly.

THE  
RETRO  
CLASSIC

## PAC-MAN (Namco, 1980)

The only character to consistently beat Mario in terms of recognition, dot-guzzler and ghost-worrier *Pac-Man* exists on practically every platform from the VIC-20 to the Xbox One. The original coin-op was a landmark title, and the character became synonymous with an industry for good reason: *Pac-Man* is a cracking game. Yes, it's simple, and yes, it lacks the bells and whistles of the excellent Championship Edition reboots. But if you want to get hypnotised by the elegant simplicity of one of the most important games ever created, you need to experience *Pac-Man* as it was meant to be played.

THE  
COIN  
GUZZLER

## TIME CRISIS II (Namco, 1997)

When *Time Crisis II* arrived, arcades were in decline, largely because home consoles had caught up — at least in terms of graphics and processing power. But as tech marched on, it left behind concepts like light-gun games, which require old-school CRTs. *Time Crisis II* is a great example — a crazed analogue of a film that, unlike modern fare, isn't actually trying to be a film. Terrible voice acting and clunky cut-scenes add to the game's wilfully OTT nature, and there's something tremendously satisfying about stamping on the cover pedal and using the gun, rather than faffing about with a rubbish plastic accessory or gamepad.





THE JOYFUL RACER



### DAYTONA USA (Sega, 1994)

Racing games shouldn't involve earning licences or drab realism. They should be about the exhilaration of speed! Colour! Joy! Flinging a car around mad circuits with merry abandon and drifting for miles! By 1994, technology had caught up with such ambition, enabling Sega's *Daytona USA* to dazzle. Yes, it's now available on consoles, but this game's sit-down cabinet – complete with chunky steering wheel and “Daytonaaaa!” soundtrack – recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, and it still holds up. See also Sega's masterful *OutRun 2*, another arcade-racing classic.

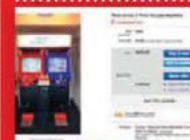
### THREE WAYS TO PLAY



#### PLAY AN ORIGINAL

Arcades used to be everywhere, but now they're rarer than Pac-Man's teeth. It's worth a visit to The Heart Of Gaming. It has endless rooms filled with cabinets from the last 35 years (like the three to your left), with overnight sessions available for ten people or more. Gamers can settle in for hours and order pizza, with a bar to be added soon.

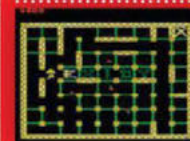
from £7 (\$14) / [theheartofgaming.co.uk](http://theheartofgaming.co.uk)



#### BUY AN ORIGINAL

Cleared a corner? Time to head over to eBay and try your luck at securing an original console, bearing in mind the tips on the opposite page. Also check out klov.net (short for Killer List Of Videogames). It's a fantastic resource for budding collectors and an exhaustive museum of everything arcade-y, right down to archives of flyers and manuals.

[ebay.com](http://ebay.com)



#### FIRE UP A MAME

Legally grey at best and some distance from a 'proper' experience, MAME (short for Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator) is nonetheless the best way of playing many free classic titles on your PC. Download the latest MAME release along with the site's free, legal ROMs, and delve into games that made the likes of *Time Crisis II* possible.

[mamedev.org](http://mamedev.org)



# 6 INSTANT UPGRADES

## STARGAZING

Fancy a sobering but spectacular reminder of your complete insignificance in the universe? These stars of amateur astronomy are only too happy to oblige



Illustration Jamie Sneedon





### 1 CANON EOS 60DA

For earth-bound cameras, invisible wavelengths of light like ultraviolet are a distraction, so they come with coatings and filters to remove them. But in astrophotography, photons of any persuasion are welcome, with some of the best detail in deep space objects found here. Canon's special full-spectrum DSLRs can't be beaten for what they capture, and the 60Da is their current Milky Way master. Go for the body-only option, using the savings to get an eyepiece adaptor to suit you. [US\\$1500 \(\\$1915\) / amazon.com](#)



### 2 FLUX PORTABLE SEAT

Though your brain is excited about the idea of standing around for hours and staring into the dawn of time, your feet aren't quite as keen. And your back isn't too happy about it either. For long stargazing sessions a seat is mandatory, and they don't come much better than this one. Made from a single sheet of durable, weatherproof plastic, the Flux packs flat to a highly portable envelope, but magically expands to a proper seat in seconds. [£55 \(\\$15\) / onlinereality.co.uk](#)



### 3 VIXEN SG 2.1X42 WIDEFIELD BINOCULARS

Sure, onlookers will assume you are off to the opera, but these super-compact widefield binoculars are highly useful when it comes to looking at some of the universe's big-scale phenomena, like constellations or those never-know-quite-where-they'll-be meteors. A respectable 2.1x bump in eye-power gives you extra detail without having to sacrifice seeing the big picture. And they do work pretty well at the opera. [£225 \(\\$460\) / firstlightoptics.com](#)



### 4 CELESTRON NEXSTAR EVOLUTION

This is an obliging robot butler of a telescope: the motorised, battery-powered Go-To mount has Wi-Fi and GPS, so you can pick a star or planet in the iOS or Android app and have the scope find and track the object. And such gadgetry doesn't come at the expense of optics: the 8in Schmidt-Cassegrain scope picks out planetary details like Saturn's rings and Jupiter's spots. It's about the best, easiest to use multi-purpose telescope you can buy. [£1595 \(\\$3265\) / celestron.com](#)



### 5 BAADER Q TURRET

Focusing perfectly on a tiny point of light that's so far away it can barely be expressed in miles is often tricky. And having to re-adjust everything just because you want to swap an eyepiece or cue up your camera is beyond annoying, which is why the simple but amazing Q Turret deserves some sort of award for making the blindingly obvious work so very well. It's effectively a carousel of four 1.25in eyepiece mounts to which you may attach your optics of choice – each is then a simple swivel away. [£70 \(\\$145\) / firstlightoptics.com](#)



### 6 SKY SAFARI 4 PRO

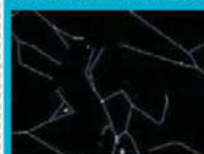
Take the entire sum of human knowledge about the universe: that's 25 million stars, 750,000 galaxies, over half a million other celestial objects, detailed maps of the moon and Mars, hi-res images from NASA missions, calendars of events including meteor showers, encyclopaedic entries on just about everything related to the heavens and plenty more. Now bake that into a single, offline, easy-to-use and breathtakingly gorgeous app. There are cheaper versions of the app available, but why compromise on the universe? [from \\$33 / iOS, Android](#)

## HOW TO SPOT SHOOTING STARS



### 1. PICK THE BEST SPOT

The annual Taurids meteor shower will be at its peak on 11-12 November. Your ideal viewing spot will have little light pollution and a wide view of the sky.



### 2. LOOK IN THE RIGHT PLACE

The Taurids will appear to emanate from the Taurus constellation (above and to the right of Orion). They can appear in any part of the sky, but you'll have the best chance of seeing them some 15° from the centre of Taurus.



### 3. RECORD EVERYTHING

For bonus points, print out a constellation map and try to plot any meteors that you see on it. Recording observations is fun, a habit of good astronomers, and sometimes useful.



### 4. TAKE PICTURES

Any camera with a long exposure time can be set up to take good pics. You will need some luck, but take some test shots that expose the stars correctly. Use a large memory card and take as many snaps as you can.



5

WAYS TO...

## BECOME A HYPERLAPSE PRO

Instagram's new app has made timelapse videos easier than ever, but there are ways to take the art of speeding up time to the next level. Here's how to become a Hyperlapse master at 12x speed

1

## Take a wider view of the situation

## Olloclip lens

While your camera's field of view is usually wide enough, if you want to capture large scenes or achieve that model village effect, clip on an Olloclip lens. Its 4-in-1 system can switch to fisheye for some wide-angle distortion, or try capturing frenzied insect activity up close with its two macro settings.

\$139 / [olloclip.com](http://olloclip.com)

2

## Dare to not be square

## Squaready For Video

Hyperlapse doesn't limit you to one aspect ratio, but Instagram (where you'll want to share your movies) does. Happily, you don't have to chop the sides off your film: Squaready For Video adds bars to your video, retaining its aspect ratio. Handily, the app also lets you trim your vid's length, mute the audio and add a soundtrack.

\$free / iOS

1



3

## Get your shot locked down

## Joby GripTight

While Hyperlapse will stabilise wobbly footage, try attaching your phone to the solid Joby GripTight Gorillapod Stand: a steady view is perfect for moving scenes. And it also allows you to get in on the action – want to see yourself cooking, cleaning or decorating at high speed? Of course you do.

\$44 / [joby.com](http://joby.com)

4

## Take it for a ride

## Neo Grab Car Mount

Filming while strolling along can produce decent results, but if you want pacy, moving scenes with changing surroundings, have a go at filming from a moving vehicle. Perch your phone on the dashboard of a car or in a bus window using the Neo Grab suction mount to see the world whoosh by at speed. This works especially well in busy city streets.

US\$35 (\$45) / [neograph.com](http://neograph.com)

5

## Stay focused

## Tap and hold

Hyperlapse is nicely straightforward, with not a lot of adjustments to be made apart from length and playback speed. Even so, it's important to remember the role of focus and exposure. A single tap will let you choose a point in the scene to pick focus and exposure from; but to make sure it doesn't change as you move around, tap and hold on your subject.

3



4



**EIGHT THAT SOMETHIN'** Yes, there is another way to take high-speed time-lapse videos: just use the native camera app in iOS 8. It's crafty, but not as fully featured as Hyperlapse.





## 5-MINUTE HACKS

# IF NOTHING ELSE, AT LEAST...

### ...STRIKE USERNAME GOLD

Hey, **captain\_slowcoach96**, too bad you were too late to get a better username. Let's make sure you win next time:

**1. Head to [earlyclaim.com](http://earlyclaim.com)** and type in your preferred username for new startups. Sign up and this handle will be reserved for pre-launch or pre-beta startup services.

**2. To further boost your chances** of username success, add a 'fallback' name. If your first choice isn't possible, this will be put before the startup gods for rubber-stamping.

**3. Missed out on your first choice** Twitter handle? All is not lost. Register your desired @name at [tweetclaims.com](http://tweetclaims.com) and, if it's been inactive for a while, the service will let you know when Twitter silently releases it back into the wild.

EARLYCLAIM

PRESS ENQUIRES + STARTUP

RESERVE YOUR FAVORITE USERNAME IN NEW STARTUPS  
we sign you up to new startups so that you don't get stuck with crappy usernames

HURRY!

3572

USERNAMES GONE. FOREVER.



my preferred username

MINE!

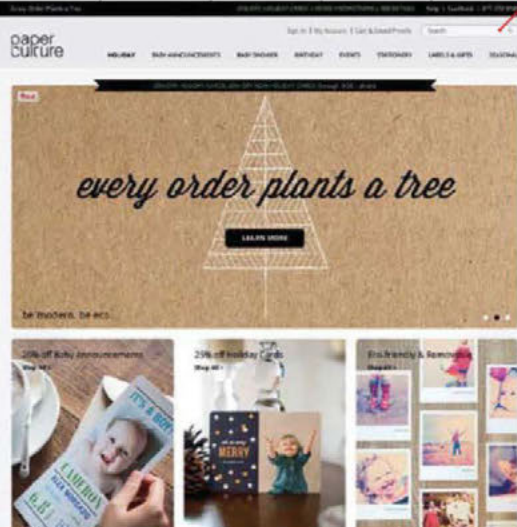
### ...BE A CARD THIS CHRISTMAS

Let's face it, last year's e-card was **generic** and bland to the point of being offensive. Time to up your greetings game:

**1. Go to Paper Culture ([paperculture.com](http://paperculture.com)).** Unlike most other custom card sites, it uses 100% recycled paper and plants a tree with every order.

**2. Choose your card** from hundreds of designs, filtering by the number of photos you want to include. Now use the Aviary photo editor to tweak your yuletide masterpiece.

**3. Not quite perfect?** Check 'request designer assistance' and a card expert will help you fine-tune it, emailing you a proof the very next day. Congratulations, you are now the Patrick Bateman of Christmas cards. Ho ho ho.



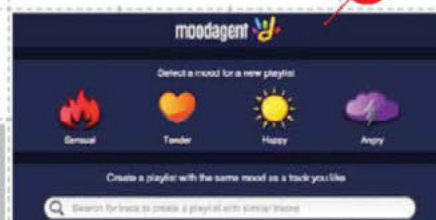
### ...FINE-TUNE SPOTIFY

You've got **Spotify Premium**, hungry ears and a fine bottle of spare time. It's a good start; now for the finishing touches:

**1. To auto-generate playlists** based on your mood, go to 'app finder' and install 'Moodagent'. Here you can choose an atmosphere or even select the track you'd like to inform the mood of your playlist.

**2. Like Spotify's Radio function** but still get frequent clangers? Go to [getdenied.com](http://getdenied.com) and install the free trial Mac app. This will auto-skip songs you don't like.

**3. To explore the unloved tundra of Spotify songs** that somehow have a play count of zero, head to [forgotify.com](http://forgotify.com). Your bravery might just be rewarded with a newfound love of Hungarian drone metal.



### TUNE IN NEXT MONTH TO...

- See in the New Year in style
- Enjoy the best alternative Christmas films
- Take your hi-fi higher





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YOUR DESK

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# Stuff


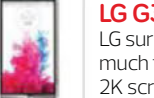

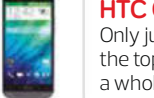
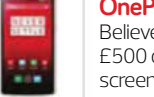
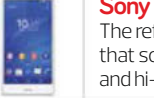

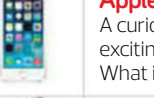
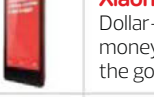

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For full reviews of every product in the top 10s, visit [stuff.tv/reviews](http://stuff.tv/reviews)

<div>HOT BUY</div> <div>NEW</div> <div>1</div>		<p><b>Motorola Moto X</b></p> <p>After the Moto X, you won't want to go back to any other Android. It's smart, fast and beautifully crafted. Motorola's software works together seamlessly to make your life that bit easier and its brilliant Moto Maker means a personalised top-spec smartphone like never before. The Motorola feels like it's built for everyone, something made even sweeter by the price. It's no budget Moto G, but it is a reasonable £460 for the 32GB model. Who could say no to that?</p>	<p><b>STUFF SAYS</b></p> <p>The first truly gorgeous, seriously-specced Android phone that puts you in control – it's brilliant</p> <p>US\$500 (\$635)</p> <p>★★★★★</p>
2		<p><b>LG G3</b></p> <p>LG surprises us again. There's barely a single thing wrong with the G3... and so, so much that's right. Upgrades range from sleeker back buttons to the bigger, better 2K screen and laser-assisted camera. And it still lasts 15 hours. How do they do it?</p>	<p>\$868</p> <p>★★★★★</p>
<div>NEW</div> <div>3</div>		<p><b>Apple iPhone 6</b></p> <p>With its slim, deeply attractive build and software overhaul, the iPhone 6 is the freshest-feeling iPhone in years. Its larger screen is big enough to be a useful improvement, with gorgeous colours, and this is Apple's best ever battery.</p>	<p>from \$988</p> <p>★★★★★</p>
4		<p><b>HTC One M8</b></p> <p>Only just toppled by the new LG, HTC's flagship phone has enough power to take it to the top of the AnTuTu benchmarks. It's a beaut to look at and to use, and it's even got a whole load of Lytro-style post-snap refocus features for photographic fun.</p>	<p>from \$998</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p><b>BEST FOR RAW POWER</b></p>
5		<p><b>OnePlus One</b></p> <p>Believe the hype. To get one of the best smartphones on the planet, you don't need £500 or £40 a month any more. You just need an invite. In terms of design, performance, screen and battery life you simply can't get better than this for anywhere near £300.</p>	<p>from US\$299 (\$380)</p> <p>★★★★★</p>
<div>NEW</div> <div>6</div>		<p><b>Sony Xperia Z3</b></p> <p>The refined Xperia Z3 is the phone the Z2 should have been and every bit as good as that sounds. It's sleeker and easier to hold, but with the same stunning screen, camera and hi-res audio. Not to mention the incredible battery life. PS4 Remote Play is due soon.</p>	<p>\$998</p> <p>★★★★★</p>
7		<p><b>Samsung Galaxy S5</b></p> <p>Big, bold and stuffed with tech, the Galaxy S5 is a bona fide superphone that will delight Samsung fans, although it has some very stiff competition. It has a faster processor, a slightly bigger screen and a more solid (if not quite stylish) feel than the S4.</p>	<p>\$1018</p> <p>★★★★★</p>
8		<p><b>Apple iPhone 5s</b></p> <p>A curious blend of tried-and-tested – 4in screen, design, huge cost – with new-and-exciting features like a 64-bit processor, fingerprint-sensing home button and iOS 7. What it adds up to is an easy purchase for most... but we're ready for iPhone 6.</p>	<p>from \$988</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p><b>BEST FOR APPLE FANS</b></p>
9		<p><b>Xiaomi Redmi</b></p> <p>Dollar-for-dollar, this is undisputedly the best Android phone you can get for your money. At just \$169 without contract for excellent performance, solid hardware, and the gorgeous MIUI, you'll be hard pressed to find a realistic alternative.</p>	<p>\$169</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p><b>BEST FOR VALUE</b></p>
10		<p><b>Google Nexus 5</b></p> <p>Delivering top-end spec at a mid-range price, the new Nexus has a bigger 4.95in screen, faster processor and a satisfactory 8MP snapper. But the biggest improvement is its chocolatey-smooth Android KitKat 4.4 OS. Astounding value.</p>	<p>from US\$349 (\$445)</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p><b>BEST FOR PRICE TAG</b></p>

● Prices quoted are for handset only unless otherwise stated



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<b>HOT BUY</b> <b>1</b>	 <p><b>Apple iPad Air</b>          The more things change, the more they stay the same. As the addition of the 'Air' moniker implies, the iPad's been slimmed down on the outside and beefed up on the inside, while retaining all the other goodies that made previous versions great. So it now rocks the 64-bit A7 chip and M7 motion coprocessor that debuted with the iPhone 5s, while keeping the gorgeous screen, quality build and abundance of tablet-optimised apps that first won our hearts.</p>	<p><b>STUFF SAYS</b>          Now thinner, lighter and more powerful than ever, the iPad Air is a beautiful sliver of gadget heaven          from \$583 ★★★★★</p>
<b>2</b>	 <p><b>Apple iPad Mini With Retina Display</b>          Apple's baby tab has been in for a nip and a tuck and emerged with a youthful-looking 2048x1536 screen. The flawless build quality, creativity-friendly 7.9in form and oodles of tablet-optimised apps remain; only a few colour inaccuracies keep it behind the Air.</p>	<p>from \$548 ★★★★★  <b>BEST FOR CREATIVITY ON THE MOVE</b></p>
<b>3</b>	 <p><b>Samsung Galaxy Tab S 10.5</b>          Samsung has blessed the Galaxy Tab with one of the best tablet screens we've ever laid eyes on, plus an impressive camera and some incredible stamina – but there are performance niggles and Apple's tablet app selection is still far superior.</p>	<p>from \$848 ★★★★★  <b>BEST FOR MAGAZINES AND MOVIES</b></p>
<b>4</b>	 <p><b>Samsung Galaxy Tab S 8.4</b>          Superb screen, unique features... really, there's very little that's missing here. For us the iPad Mini beats the Samsung by a whisker for its design, performance and wider selection of optimised apps, but against other Android tabs it's a winner.</p>	<p>from \$598 ★★★★★</p>
<b>5</b>	 <p><b>Google Nexus 7</b>          The Nexus has moved further ahead of the Android pack by virtue of getting an update to OS 4.4 KitKat. It's now smoother, faster and more battery-friendly than ever, while its 323 pixel-per-inch 1080p screen and quad-core power still impress.</p>	<p>from US\$229 (\$295) ★★★★★  <b>BEST FOR VALUE AND PERFORMANCE</b></p>
<b>6</b>	 <p><b>Microsoft Surface Pro 3</b>          At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.</p>	<p>from \$1108 ★★★★★  <b>BEST FOR USING ANYWHERE</b></p>
<b>7</b>	 <p><b>Asus Transformer Pad</b>          The Transformers have always been more about laptop replacement than tableteering, and this one is the laptopiest yet. A 2560x1600 screen, two-day battery life (with keyboard dock) and quad-core Tegra processor all work Android up into a frenzy.</p>	<p>\$749 ★★★★★  <b>BEST FOR ALL-ROUND EXCELLENCE</b></p>
<b>8</b>	 <p><b>Amazon Kindle Fire HDX 7in</b>          The Fire HDX presents a sanitised version of Android cloaked in a user-friendly Amazon skin. There's even a 'Mayday' button for instant video help. A great build, fast processor and stunning screen round off a package that'll appeal to families and less techy types.</p>	<p>from US\$229 (\$295) ★★★★★  <b>BEST FOR SAFE &amp; SIMPLE TABLETEERING</b></p>
<b>9</b>	 <p><b>Asus Transformer Book T100</b>          This 10.1in tab-and-dock combo has enough grunt to run full Win 8.1 thanks to Intel's new Baytrail CPU. The 1366x768 screen is a good 'un, with crisp text, great contrast and colours that pop, while dual-band Wi-Fi and a day-long battery are also welcome.</p>	<p>from \$599 ★★★★★  <b>BEST FOR DESKTOP VERSATILITY</b></p>
<b>10</b>	 <p><b>Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1 (2014)</b>          The new 10.1 is fit to bursting with clever tricks, comes with the note-tastic S Pen and has a stunning 2560x1600 screen. But while we can forgive it its tacky looks, minor performance glitches deny it that fifth star; we hope firmware updates will fix them.</p>	<p>from \$798 ★★★★★☆</p>

## IT'S REAL CONVENIENCE



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**LOCKER SERVICE**

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**Mobile Recharge**

**MOBILE RECHARGE**

Charge your mobile phone while you shop at our Customer Service Counter at Level 1!

HOT  
BUY

1

**Sonos Playbar**

No holes involved. Just a simple setup process with this one-piece wonder, armed with six woofers and three tweeters. It plays nice with other Sonos systems, combining with the Play:3 and Play:1 speakers to create an immersive aural network. Kids and neighbours hardly have reason to complain when the handy Night Mode kicks in and compresses the volume to keep the din down.

**STUFF SAYS**

This speaker is single, ready to mingle and sets the mood in the living room, minus the complicated setup

\$1299 ★★★★★☆

2

**Bose SoundLink Wireless**

The Bose SoundLink Wireless speaker is definitely worth your attention (and money). This impressive Bluetooth speaker delivers warm sounds, with a balanced delivery of the audio range. What you pay, is what you get.

\$549

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
TOP SOUND  
QUALITY**

3

**Apple TV**

No sign of Apple's rumoured TV set, so this tiny media streamer will have to do for now. And why not, it streams movies at 1080p, lets you access Apple's extensive movie collection on iTunes, and hooks up your iOS devices with a full HD TV wirelessly.

\$148

★★★★★

4

**Bowers & Wilkins Z2**

The baby of B&W's AirPlay range is a little belter, and it adds a proper Lightning dock to Apple's wireless tech. It'll easily fill a small to medium-sized room with chunky bass, punchy beats and lovely, clear vocals. You'll buy it for the look, but love it for the sound.

\$649

★★★★★

5

**Denon CEOL Piccolo**

A diminutive standard-bearer for next-gen micro hi-fi, the Denon's got Spotify, a control app, and it'll stream your own tunes, right up to 24-bit. The dock's 30-pin, but who cares when you've also got AirPlay? Add Q Acoustics 2020i speakers for awesome sound.

\$399

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
VERSATILITY  
AND VALUE**

6

**Libratone Zipp**

A fuzzy, cylindrical, colourful AirPlay dock that will deliver detailed, punchy 360-degree sound anywhere at all, thanks to a built-in battery that gives it four hours of outdoors life. Direct Wi-Fi skills free you from cables, routers, and everything but the boogie.

\$589

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
AL FRESCO  
PARTIES**

7

**Philips Fidelio SoundSphere DS9800W**

In a world awash with AirPlay-equipped docks, the SoundSpheres have created a niche for themselves by offering proper two-channel stereo output. Idiosyncratic looks ensure they'll stand out even further from the crowd, and they sound great too.

\$1299

★★★★★

8

**Sony SRS-BTM8**

Forget that this Sony looks uncomfortably like a handbag because it's actually one of the biggest bargains in hi-fi right now. Pop in four AA batteries (old-school, right?) and it will power a party in the park. It's got fancy NFC, too, but the best thing is that it sounds ace.

\$139

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
BARGAINOUS  
BLUETOOTH**

9

**B&W Zeppelin Air**

The Air brings the sound and design smarts we've come to expect from the Zeppelin family and adds AirPlay streaming as a bonus trick. Pair it with the app, and let fellow music lovers add their music collection to a collaborative list.

\$1099

★★★★☆

10

**Sonos Play:1**

Small yet powerful. Apt words for Sonos' smallest ever wireless speaker. On its own, this wireless portable speaker packs quite a punch. Its potential is limitless, once you hook it up with its fellow Sonos speakers to create a surround sound system.

from \$399

★★★★☆

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HOT  
BUY  
1**Sennheiser IE 800**

These bad boys pack the latest in ear gear tech to bring you more than you can probably hear. Comfortable and lightweight, they're scratch-resistant to handle wear and tear. Expect real-life detail and crystal clear fidelity. Your ears won't be able to do any better.

**STUFF SAYS**

They might cost more than what you'd usually spend on earphones, but they sound heaps better than regular earphones.

\$1139 ★★★★★

2

**Shure SE846**

These sound-isolating earphones will make you feel like you possess the super sonic hearing of a bat. Thanks to its quad HD microdriver and a low-pass filter, depth is assured without compromising on detail.

\$1300

★★★★★

3

**Klipsch X11i**

The successor to the chart-topping X10i is the smallest and lightest pair of in-ears to have ever lived. And it's a good thing that their sound belies their size; we're talking full-bodied tunes with impressive bass to rattle your bones.

\$569

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
JUST ABOUT  
EVERYTHING**

4

**Sennheiser MOMENTUM On-Ear**

The MOMENTUM On-Ear is one of the best looking, well-built headphones we have seen in a while. Available in a variety of seven colours, they pack high-end transducers for hi-fidelity sound on a solid bedrock of bass.

\$299

★★★★★

5

**A-JAYS FIVE**

With three different full-feature models tailor-made for your iOS, Android or Windows device, these earphones mean business. The new driver and aluminium crafting help them deliver big tunes and impeccable aural detail despite their slight package.

\$140

★★★★★

6

**Bowers & Wilkins P3**

Superb sound and a solid and achingly stylish design make these the best portable on-ears around. The fact that two cables come in the box – one with a mic and remote for iPhones, one without – only sweetens the already candy floss-like deal.

\$330

★★★★★

7

**B&O Beoplay H3**

These good-looking fellas demonstrate what highly skilled engineering, having been milled from a single block of aluminium. But they're not just about the aesthetics, these in-ears also boast a surprisingly spacious soundstage and good clarity.

\$329

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
STYLISH SOUND  
SEEKERS**

8

**Bose AE2w**

We're not going to pretend that the protruding Bluetooth module isn't a rather ugly touch, but what's most important is that these Bose headphones deliver wireless sound of superb quality. We'll put up with looking a wee bit daft for musical magic.

\$350

★★★★★

9

**Bose FreeStyle earbuds**

While their fit might not be the most conventional, you'll be surprised at how secure they feel once they're in. Water-resistant to accompany you on your runs, they serve up balanced tones on a neutral platter.

\$219

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
ACTIVE  
GO-GETTERS**

10

**Sony XB70AP**

The name says it all – Xtra Bass. The Power Bass Duct in these come ready to bottom out the drop in your dubstep. If it's low tones you desire, these in-ears are the perfect pair for you, if you don't mind missing out on the clarity of other notes.

\$109

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
BASS JUNKIES**

IT'S MY DIGISTYLE

FEATURE OF THE MONTH

Funan  
DigitalLife Mall**Sports Connection #02-25**

Sports Connection Private Limited has been in business for over 30 years, where you will find the lowest prices for the highest quality. Visit us today for full range of products from drinking bottles, backpacks, tents to outdoor lifestyle accessories.

**Case Logic #01-07**

Case Logic was founded in 1984 in Colorado. Beginning with just two audiocassette storage cases. Since then we have continued to develop exceptional products to organize and transport ever-evolving technology. Ranging from Camera cases and backpacks to sling and backpacks, briefcase, sleeves, toiletries, DVDs, CDs etc. Whenever you need to find a carrier that you can't find, look for us. We will be able to solve your problem.



HOT  
BUY

1

**Samsung UA65F9000AK UHD 4K TV**

You won't have to fork out thousands of dollars to get a new TV when 4K content comes to town. Its future-proofed Smart Evolution feature lets you purchase and attach a next-generation kit to boost the performance and compatibility of the smart TV for future 4K video standards. Now that's upping the ante.

**STUFF SAYS**

Upgrading your TV has never been easier. Just plug a new kit, and voila - instant TV with boosted hardware and better features

\$9499 ★★★★★

2

**Samsung UA55H7000AK**

Striking a fine balance between design and performance, this slim yet powerful LED TV is a great centrepiece for your living room with its 1080p screen resolution and simple yet smart features.

\$3499

★★★★★

3

**LG 55LB750T**

LG's latest full HD TV is armed with a modest 2.1 channel, 24W speaker that complements the clear and sharp imagery. It's also the first webOS-powered TV, showcasing how smart TVs should be made.

\$3299

★★★★★

4

**LG LA9700 UHD 4K TV 55in**

8.3 million pixels on this LG ultra HD 4K TV will give your eyes a visual treat. LG's upscaling technology, which analyzes data and enhances each pixel, delivers a smashing, eye-popping viewing experience with your usual full HD content.

\$6999

★★★★☆

5

**Samsung UA65F8000AK**

Armed with a quad-core processor to power its smart features, this smart TV from Samsung is a good-looking beast, thanks to its slim 5mm bezel, crisp metal finish and deep arc stand. Let its Intelligent Viewing automatically optimise the picture.

\$8999

★★★★☆

6

**Sony KDL-55W800B**

Design is clearly a priority with this beautiful Sony display. The LED panel and full HD resolution will amaze you, but not as much as the old-school user interface that'll make you feel right at home.

\$2999

★★★★☆

7

**LG LA8600 55in**

Armed with an elegant design and ultra narrow bezel, this LG full HD TV is so sleek you might mistake it for an actual canvas on the wall. Motion blurring is removed with its TruMotion 240Hz feature and its flicker-free 3D glasses brings movie to life.

\$4899

★★★★☆

8

**Toshiba 39L3300VE**

This slim full HD TV delivers an astounding 1080p viewing experience, for a fraction of the prices tagged to the latest full HD TVs. Hook it up to your game console, and you get to hear and see its amazing Game sound and video mode.

\$899

★★★★☆

9

**Sony KD-55X8504A**

Welcome to the cheap end of the 4K ultra high definition (UHD) spectrum. The only caveat, is the lack of 4K content to play with. That said, normal HD movies looks just as wonderful, so the \$5999 spent is justifiable.

\$5999

★★★★☆

10

**LG LN5710 42in**

The best TVs are those that get the job done, without diverging from its real mission - delivering crisp and sharp full HD movies. This modestly-sized (by TV standards) LG display has the smarts to record TV shows within its 2GB internal memory.

\$1099

★★★☆☆

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VII PC Trade	#04-33	Tel: 6334 3381
Mac. Infinity	#04-K3	Tel: 6333 9721
X-Planet	#03-24	Tel: 6337 3484



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**TROUBLESHOOTING ISSUES**  
**REPAIR AND SERVICING ISSUES**  
**OTHER ISSUES**

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HOT  
BUY

1



### Apple MacBook Air 13in (2014)

The 2014 MacBook Air update means, once again, our favourite old laptop is now our favourite new laptop. Nothing's changed on the outside, and under the skin there's just a slight processor boost from 1.3GHz to 1.4GHz, but combined with a price cut of \$200 on each model we're still happy with that. The very top model, which comes with a 256GB SSD, is now just under two grand, too. Head to stuff.tv for our full reviews of both 13in and 11in versions.

#### STUFF SAYS

It's not a major upgrade, but Apple has improved the Air's already awesome spec and lopped \$200 off the price from \$1328 ★★★★★

2



### Apple MacBook Pro with Retina Display 13in (2014)

Choosing between Air and Pro is getting harder. Both now run on Haswell chips, but the Pro is faster, with a 2014 processor boost. There's a 4K-capable Thunderbolt 2 port, and then that Retina screen, one of the most gorgeous you'll see. Tough call.

from \$1688  
★★★★★

**BEST FOR**  
EVERYTHING  
BAR THE PRICE

3



### Microsoft Surface Pro 3

At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.

from \$1108  
(with Type Cover)  
★★★★★

**BEST FOR**  
USING  
ANYWHERE

4



### Asus ROG G750

Powered by the latest Intel Core i7 and Nvidia GeForce 870M GTX graphics processor, this beastly machine is the one you'll run every game you buy in the next few years on extreme graphics settings. Chunky monkey? More like an overpowered gorilla.

from \$2298  
★★★★☆

**BEST FOR**  
TROCING  
THE GAMING  
COMPETITION

5



### Asus Zenbook UX302

Asus has done a wonderful job of creating an ultra-slim laptop that's as far removed from Apple's influence as possible, while maintaining a stylish and unique aesthetic. The 13.3in display is razor-sharp and colourful – this is our favourite Ultrabook.

from \$1699  
★★★★☆

6



### Acer C720 Chromebook

Bargain Chromebooks are everywhere right now, but the C720 stands out even so. It's well made, well specced (for a Chromebook) and crucially, has proper ports: HDMI, USB3.0 and SD are all here. The HP at No.8 is prettier, but the Acer's the one we'd buy.

\$469  
★★★★☆

**BEST FOR**  
VALUE AND  
PORTABILITY

7



### Acer Aspire S7

The Aspire S7 is almost the perfect Ultrabook – it matches the MacBook Air for weight, beats it for slimness by 6mm, and has a gorgeous 1920x1080 touch-friendly screen. Only its battery, which lasted a mere 5hrs on test, prevents it getting that fifth star.

from \$898  
★★★★☆

8



### HP Chromebook 11

HP is the latest manufacturer to take on the Chromebook and has done a fine job, making it small, light and everything a neo-netbook should be. It's still no powerhouse, but a better display and slicker media playback won us over. It even charges via USB.

\$449  
★★★★☆

**BEST FOR**  
VALUE AND  
PORTABILITY

9



### Asus S200E

The touchscreen makes it ideal for Windows 8, but the S200E's also got a top keyboard, bags of connectivity and enough power for 3D gaming. Specs aren't top notch, but with an i3 Sandy Bridge core, 4GB RAM and a 500GB HDD, it's good enough at this price.

\$799  
★★★★☆

10



### Asus Taichi 21

This Win8 hybrid sticks a live tile-friendly touchscreen on top of a full laptop sporting Core i7 innards. You know how the saying goes: why settle for one 11.6in HD screen when you can have two? And there's now a 13in version too – the Taichi 31.

\$2698  
★★★★☆

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Tech IT




Snap IT

Play IT




Snag IT

Check IT




## HOME COMPUTERS

HOT BUY	1		<b>Apple iMac</b> The iMac is thinner and more powerful than ever: Core i5 or i7 and at least 8GB RAM running the none-more-elegant OS X Mountain Lion. A 2013 update brings Intel's Haswell CPU, a hybrid storage option, speedy 802.11ac Wi-Fi and a price increase.	from \$1788 ★★★★★	<b>BEST FOR</b> ALL-ROUND BRILLIANCE
	2		<b>Alienware X51</b> As happy by a TV as it is under a desk, this PC is the size of an Xbox 360 but it runs a whole lot faster – and quieter – with a Core i5 Ivy Bridge processor, 8GB of RAM and 1GB Nvidia GTX 660 graphics card. We'll be testing the Haswell update soon.	from \$1699 ★★★★★	<b>BEST FOR</b> HARDCORE GAMERS
	3		<b>Mac Pro</b> You want a beast? Say hello to the Mac Pro. This monstrously powerful system has the full works: Intel's ultra-fast quad-core Xeon processor, 12GB of RAM and a dual graphics card to handle even the most demanding post-production work.	\$4288 ★★★★☆	<b>BEST FOR</b> RAW POWER

## BLU-RAY PLAYERS

HOT BUY	1		<b>Sony BDP-S790</b> A quite remarkable device, this Sony sounds great, has a wonderful picture in 2D or 3D and is crammed with on-demand content including Sony's own Movies Unlimited. Its trump card is 4K video upscaling: you may not need it yet, but you soon will.	\$499 ★★★★★	<b>BEST FOR</b> ON-DEMAND FILMS
	2		<b>Panasonic DMP-BDT330</b> Panny's latest Blu-ray player just pips the Sony above on pure picture and sound quality, but loses out on smart features and on-demand options. So if disc-based viewing is more your thing than streaming, go for this one. Plus it looks great too.	\$440 ★★★★★	<b>BEST FOR</b> SOUND AND PICTURE
	3		<b>Marantz UD7007</b> Pricey like an Aston Martin is pricey and about as satisfying to own, this Marantz can play any disc you like, streams music at high-def resolutions and can withstand an earthquake. If you really, really take movies and music seriously, this is your player.	\$1199 ★★★★★	<b>BEST FOR</b> THE ULTIMATE IN QUALITY

## CAMCORDERS

HOT BUY	1		<b>Sony HDR-CX410VE</b> Our choice for full-fat filming at non-professional prices, the Sony records razor-sharp footage at a TV-style 50fps, has a monster 55x zoom, a three-hour battery and image stabilisation that lets you run and shoot handheld simultaneously. Just don't trip up.	\$1019 ★★★★★	<b>BEST FOR</b> TOP-QUALITY HOME MOVIES
	2		<b>GoPro Hero3 Silver Edition</b> The rugged Hero3 doesn't disappoint, shooting fantastic wide-angle 1080p@30fps and 11MP snaps. Extreme videographers after 4K footage or 720p@120fps might prefer the Black Edition (\$580). The Hero3+ update brings a smaller size and better battery life.	\$469 ★★★★★	<b>BEST FOR</b> ACTION-JUNKIE FILM-MAKERS
	3		<b>Canon XA10</b> Canon's ultra-compact XA10 handles fine detail superbly due to its f/1.8 lens and 2.37MP chip. It might not look big enough to play with the big boys, but twin XLR inputs on its detachable handle give would-be filmmakers' professional prowess straight out the box.	\$2999 ★★★★★	<b>BEST FOR</b> SERIOUS SHOOTERS

## THE SHUTTERBYTES



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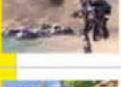
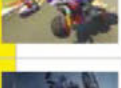


- #01-10 Piccel
- #02-02A Joy's
- #02-03B Bally Photo Electronics
- #02-07 Alan Photo
- #02-08 Eclipse
- #02-14 & 38/41 TK foto
- #02-42/43 Song Brothers



It's a great place to be at Funan DigitalLife Mall for shutter-bug lovers. All your photography needs converge under one roof, with 14 shops offering cameras and accessories, films, etc. You should be able to set your focus and zoom in on a good deal. Let's get clicking.

- #02-K5 Red Dot Photo
- #03-25 25 Cam
- #04-15 click! by Max Photo
- #04-23 Fujifilm Studio
- #04-25 Artworkfoto
- #04-18 SLR Revolution
- #04-27 John 3:16 Photo Supplies



<div>HOT BUY</div> <div>1</div>		<p><b>Grand Theft Auto 5</b> PS3/Xbox 360</p> <p>You probably think you already know everything there is to know about GTA 5. After all, if you've been alive anywhere in the world for the past year you'll have read all about life in Los Santos. So you'll already know that it shines a satirical torch on the 21st century religion of celebrity. And that everything from social media to self-help gurus gets a kicking. And that it's better-looking than ever. But really you only need to know one thing about it: it's the most fun you'll have on a console this month.</p>	<p><b>STUFF SAYS</b></p> <p>The gargantuan gameworld of Los Santos is the most entertaining place to hang out since Vice City</p> <p>★★★★★</p>
<div>2</div>		<p><b>The Last Of Us</b> PS3/PS4</p> <p>Now remastered for PS4, this is the best zombie-apocalypse game ever. It looks magnificent and plays even better, with a moving story and frights aplenty. It's tough... but then a real-life zombie apocalypse would be. Think of this as essential prep.</p>	<p>★★★★★</p> <p><b>BEST FOR STORY</b></p>
<div>NEW</div> <div>3</div>		<p><b>Forza Horizon 2</b> Xbox One</p> <p>This is everything an open-world driving game should be. There's loads to do and it captures the feeling of driving very fast better than any other racing game, to the point where <i>Forza Horizon 2</i> could soon eclipse its older brother once and for all.</p>	<p>★★★★★</p>
<div>NEW</div> <div>4</div>		<p><b>Destiny</b> PS4/Xbox One</p> <p>This isn't for everyone, and those hoping for an epic <i>Halo</i>-style campaign may be disappointed. But in every other way, <i>Destiny</i> is on a bigger, far more multiplayer level, and with the added addictive quest for loot like <i>Diablo</i> – an irresistible combination.</p>	<p>★★★★★</p>
<div>NEW</div> <div>5</div>		<p><b>FIFA 15</b> PS4/Xbox One</p> <p>If <i>FIFA 14</i> was Barcelona's tiki-taka – death by 1000 passes – then <i>FIFA 15</i> is Germany's more explosive World-Cup-winning evolution of it. Harder, faster and stronger: this is a better reflection of modern football than ever before.</p>	<p>★★★★★</p>
<div>6</div>		<p><b>Watch_Dogs</b> PC/PS3/PS4/Xbox One/Xbox 360</p> <p>This one promised big – and while it doesn't quite match the level of expectation, its recreation of Chicago is impressive, the cat-and-mouse multiplayer livens things up and the gunplay, hacking and driving provide good, solid fun with lots to do and see.</p>	<p>★★★★☆</p>
<div>7</div>		<p><b>Titanfall</b> Xbox One</p> <p>The biggest Xbox One game launch so far, this FPS robot-fighting sim came with high expectations... and just about lives up to them. It's a brilliant smash-fest, in a world where it rains massive 'Titan' robots to board and attack. The storyline is weak, though.</p>	<p>★★★★☆</p>
<div>8</div>		<p><b>Mario Kart 8</b> Wii U</p> <p>Building upon lesser recent entries while adding flashy new twists and delightful physics-defying courses, <i>Mario Kart 8</i> is a rare Wii U highlight. Although single-player still lacks punch, multiplayer is endlessly entertaining: it's glossy and fluid throughout.</p>	<p>★★★★☆</p> <p><b>BEST FOR STUDENT HOUSES</b></p>
<div>9</div>		<p><b>Dark Souls II</b> PC/PS3/Xbox 360</p> <p>You might never play a tougher game than this old-school action-RPG sequel, which drops you into the mystical land of Drangleic and lets you figure things out for yourself. Mostly by being killed...but that just makes it all the more rewarding when you get it right.</p>	<p>★★★★☆</p> <p><b>BEST FOR A HARDCORE CHALLENGE</b></p>
<div>10</div>		<p><b>Wolfenstein: The New Order</b> PC/PS3/PS4/Xbox One/Xbox 360</p> <p>How do you solve a problem like Nazi world domination? With guns. Lots of guns. Even so, this remake might not be exactly what you're expecting: as well as carnage and genetically engineered soldiers, there's a sombre message on the pointlessness of war.</p>	<p>★★★★☆</p>

## THE TRAVEL BUGS

### ✓ FEATURE OF THE MONTH

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#### Samsonite #02-03A

Strut in style anywhere with the latest work play bags by Samsonite RED. Trendy folks will be stoked with the latest F/W 2014 collection by Samsonite RED which promises an intriguing mix of unique designs, materials and details in an awesome array of chic-savvy colours and designs, safely carrying you on every part of your journey.

#### Eminent #01-06

A one-stop travel retail concept stores for everything a vacationer and business traveler would need to travel with ease, comfort and style. The Eminent concept store offers a comprehensive range of luggage, business bags, laptop bags, outdoor packs, travel accessories and all-weather apparel that cater to the needs and demand of today's travelers. The store's recently introduced new travel essential range like the memory foam travel pillow & go-girl (FMD – female urination device), is a must check-out!



<div>HOT BUY</div> <div>1</div>		<p><b>Sony PlayStation 4</b></p> <p>Sony's next-gen console may not quite be the finished article, but it's already the best games machine on the planet. With whisper-quiet operation and a sleek form, it'll slot neatly into your lounge setup, but more importantly it offers bags of power, with full 1080p on all titles and not a whiff of lag. The controller's vastly improved, too, while remote streaming to PS Vita is a nice bonus. All that and it's also cheaper than the Xbox One. When proper media streaming arrives, it'll be unstoppable.</p>	<p><b>STUFF SAYS</b></p> <p>Slick, powerful and packed with stand-out features, the PS4 delivers on the next-gen console promise</p> <p><b>\$539 ★★★★★</b></p>
2		<p><b>Microsoft Xbox One</b></p> <p>This is very different to the Xbox One of 2013. Most significantly, the unpopular Kinect feature is now out of the deal, allowing Microsoft to drop the price and releasing enough extra power for developers to make their games look and play better.</p>	<p>from \$639 ★★★★☆</p>
3		<p><b>Microsoft Xbox 360</b></p> <p>Yes, it's been succeeded by the One, but the years have been kind to the 360. With an amazing catalogue of recent games that use its full potential, brilliant media streaming skills and a low, low price it's impossible not to recommend it to cash-strapped gamers.</p>	<p>from \$339 ★★★★★</p> <p><b>BEST FOR BUDGET GAMING</b></p>
4		<p><b>Sony PlayStation 3</b></p> <p>The PS3 has been around a while, but, like the Xbox 360, that just means it has plenty of great games. Online gaming via PlayStation Network is still brilliant and still free (\$44/yr for PS4), and it's worth buying for its Blu-ray and media streaming alone.</p>	<p>from \$399 ★★★★★</p>
5		<p><b>Alienware X51 (2014)</b></p> <p>The X51 hasn't changed a huge amount, but the wee size matched with powerful components make it perfectly suited to HD gaming. Steam Machines are going to liven this market up but right now it's the best balance of power and form in PC land.</p>	<p>from \$1699 ★★★★★</p>
6		<p><b>Nintendo 3DS XL</b></p> <p>The bigger version of Nintendo's latest handheld serves up a larger 3D sweetspot and slightly more premium finish than its smaller sibling. There's still only one thumb stick, but it's a tried-and-tested design that's served Nintendo titles very well over the years.</p>	<p>\$275 ★★★★☆</p>
7		<p><b>Sony PlayStation Vita Slim</b></p> <p>The Slim (aka PCH-2000) is comfier to hold than the original Vita, it lasts longer, it no longer relies on proprietary cables and the screen is an improvement... but Sony could have gone so much further, not least by adding more than 1GB of internal storage.</p>	<p>\$299 ★★★★☆</p> <p><b>BEST FOR PORTABLE PLAYTIME</b></p>
8		<p><b>PC Specialist Nvidia GTX Titan Battlebox</b></p> <p>This powerhouse delivers a mind-blowing 4K gaming, bringing eye-searing detail to <i>Arkham Origins</i> in our test. But twin Nvidia GTX Titan graphics cards and liquid cooling doesn't come cheap, and neither will the 4K monitor you'll need to go with it.</p>	<p>£3900 (\$8280) ★★★★☆</p> <p><b>BEST FOR FLUSH 4K FETISHISTS</b></p>
9		<p><b>Nintendo Wii U</b></p> <p>While it hasn't had the same impact as the original Wii, don't underestimate the Wii U's fun factor. Nintendo's bottomless bag of superb game franchises rolls on, with the excitement of <i>Mario Kart 8</i> (with its anti-gravity karts and submarine racing) coming later this year.</p>	<p>\$449 ★★★★☆</p> <p><b>BEST FOR NINTENDO FANS</b></p>
10		<p><b>Nvidia Shield</b></p> <p>Like an Xbox controller with a 5in screen stuck to it, this Android console is (just about) portable enough to play on the bus. As well as having access to hundreds of games via Google Play, the Shield can stream full PC titles from your PC – pretty damn cool.</p>	<p>US\$250 (\$320) ★★★★☆</p>

# FUN AND EXCITEMENT AT LEVEL 5

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HOT  
APP

1

**AXS m-Station**

No longer will you have to queue at actual AXS machines – which seem to only have a queue whenever you have things to pay – and you can use just one app instead of seven. AXS m-Station lets you pay for all your bills, fines, and fees all from one place via eNets, and will even save past payments for added convenience.

**STUFF SAYS**

A real time-saver, this is the only bill payment app you'll need

For : Andoid, iOS

\$free ★★★★★

2

**HungryGoWhere**

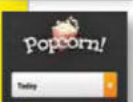
With its huge database of over 11,000 food joints and counting, the definitive food app also has tried and tested reviews from its many years active. Activate to see what's near you and even make reservations via the app itself. Handy for the hungry.

\$free

★★★★★

FOR  
ANDROID  
iOS  
WINDOWS PHONE

3

**Popcorn!**

Gathering information from GV, Cathay, and Shaw cinemas in one convenient location, you can watch trailers, search for showtimes, book tickets, and even get notifications when a new movie you've been waiting for hits the big screen.

\$free

★★★★★

FOR  
ANDROID  
iPHONE

4

**GrabTaxi**

If you need a taxi dispatched to you in a matter of minutes, GrabTaxi is the best app to go with. It shows you the taxis nearest to you, and once you get details of a driver, tracks the taxi as it makes its way to you.

\$free

★★★★★

FOR  
ANDROID  
iOS

5

**Uber**

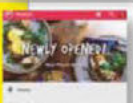
Ever wanted to be chauffeured around? Request a ride, and one of the growing number of Uber drivers will pick you up within minutes. You can even choose the level of luxury you want with the cheaper Uber X or upper-tier Uber VIP.

\$free

★★★★★

FOR  
ANDROID  
iOS

6

**Burpple**

Start a Burpple account and you'll find yourself in the embrace of like-minded people – food lovers. Just like Instagram except that it's about all things culinary, browse this visual guide to the places you must eat at, and the calories that truly count.

\$free

★★★★★

FOR  
ANDROID  
iOS  
WINDOWS PHONE

7

**Entertainer**

Save a ton of money with this app and redeem major one-for-one deals at a wide range of top restaurants and activities in Singapore, as well as luxury hotels across Asia. With over 1000 deal vouchers available, it'll pay for itself in no time.

\$free  
(from \$19 a month)  
★★★★★FOR  
ANDROID  
iPHONE

8

**ComfortDelGro Taxi Booking**

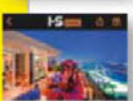
Even non-registered users can book a taxi with their current location determined by their smartphone GPS. But of course, there are perks being a registered user – it saves your last three pick up locations so you can make a booking even faster.

\$free

★★★★★

FOR  
ANDROID  
iOS

9

**I-S Now**

Brought to you by the folks that do I-S Magazine, this city guide tells you all about what to do and where to be, featuring everything from upcoming events to new places to check out. It also pulls news so you can stay up to date with what's happening.

\$free

★★★★★

FOR  
iPHONE

10

**8 Days Eat**

Get the lowdown on your favourite celebrities' best-loved haunts, or search for places according to cuisine, location, price and even mood. It's updated weekly to give you the latest in the food scene too.

\$free

★★★★★

FOR  
ANDROID  
iOS**GETTING FIT****FEATURE OF THE MONTH**
**FUNAN**  
DigitalLife Mall
**Royal Sporting House #02-01A**

Established in 1977 as an independent retail store, Royal Sporting House has since grown into a multi-brand, multi-store network that offers a wide selection of apparel, footwear, accessories and equipment from international sports brands like Reebok, Speedo, Nautica, Sperry Top-Sider and Wilson.

**Running Lab #02-31**

Running Lab is a specialty running store retailing technically advanced running apparel, footwear and accessories. We are staffed by sports trainers and experienced runners who have the expertise to match the right shoe to your foot type.



HOT  
BUY

1

**Sony DSC-HX60V**

Last year's HX50 was our previous pick for the best compact camera around, and 2014's HX60 isn't a huge departure from its predecessor in terms of build quality, ease of use, specifications and performance — all of which are excellent. And thankfully the superb 30x zoom lens remains. What it does add is NFC (for quick pairing with a tablet or phone) and a newer Bionz X processor, making it a slightly nipper performer.

**STUFF SAYS**

Sturdy, simple to use and offering a huge zoom range for its size, this is a hugely capable all-rounder

**\$569 ★★★★★**

2

**Fujifilm X20**

The X20 isn't all retro looks and no trousers. It excels in Advanced Auto mode and has manual controls and RAW shooting for creative days. The optical viewfinder, though small, is linked to the 4x zoom and frames well. All this, and it looks cool.

**\$899**

★★★★★

3

**Sony DSC-RX100III**

The 20MP RX100 is just what we're looking for in an advanced compact: pocketable with a huge 1in sensor that serves up great images. After something a bit different? Sony's crazy lens-without-a-body, the QX100, has much of the same tech.

**\$1199**

★★★★★

4

**Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ200**

If you want a superzoom cam, the Lumix FZ200 wipes the floor with its rival snoopy snappers. A small and solid build is coupled with a 24x optical zoom, an excellent auto mode and spot-on exposure abilities. The downside is the video, which is a mixed bag.

**\$799**

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
AT-A-DISTANCE  
SHOOTING**

5

**Fujifilm FinePix X100S**

Fujifilm's souped up its fixed-lens retro shooter, with faster focusing and a big APS-C sensor. It's not all new, though, keeping the 35mm-equivalent f/2 lens and hybrid viewfinder from the X100. A less retro version with black finish is now available too.

**\$1799**

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
DSLR PICS IN  
A SMALL BODY**

6

**Canon PowerShot G16**

The G16 packs a lot into its sturdy body: optical viewfinder, loads of manual controls and an f1.8–2.8, 28–140mm (equivalent) zoom lens. Upgrades over the G15 include Wi-Fi and faster burst shooting of up to 12fps, while image quality is as good as ever.

**\$699**

★★★★★

7

**Nikon Coolpix AW120**

The ultimate rugged camera: almost indestructible, and fit for temperatures as low as -10°C, it will even survive a rinse cycle in your dishwasher. The AW120 also takes lovely pictures and impressive video in both good lighting and dimmer conditions.

**\$469**

★★★★★

**BEST FOR  
EXTREME  
EXPLOITS**

8

**Canon PowerShot G1 X MkII**

This powerful snapper is back, with a tilting touchscreen and a wider wide-angle lens but no viewfinder. The zoom and video are still fairly underwhelming but in terms of sheer image quality there aren't many non-system cameras around that can beat it.

**\$1099**

★★★★☆

9

**Canon PowerShot S120**

Replacing the S110, the S120 is a compact camera for DSLR users on their days off. Its 12.1MP stills, low-light prowess and useful long-exposure modes are welcome, while its slightly laggy lens-ring control and hit-and-miss Wi-Fi features take the shine off.

**\$599**

★★★★☆

10

**Nikon Coolpix S6700**

Your phone can probably match it for wide-angle photos in good conditions, but if you want to go equipped with a bit more creative control without loading yourself down with kit, the S6700 will be a useful addition to your gadget arsenal.

**\$189**

★★★☆☆

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**CAPITASTAR**  
SIMPLY REWARDING



<b>HOT BUY</b> <b>1</b>		<b>Olympus OM-D E-M1</b> Olympus's new flagship is armed with the same excellent 16.3MP sensor as its predecessor the E-M5, but now has an improved autofocus system, a startlingly good electronic viewfinder and masses of direct controls. And look out for the E-M10: pretty much an E-M5 minus the weatherproofing and with only 3-axis stabilisation, but with an improved EVF, better metering, enhanced Wi-Fi and built-in flash in a smaller, cheaper body.	<b>STUFF SAYS</b> Take the E-M5's amazing speed and quality, then add pro controls and you get the best system cam so far <b>\$1948 ★★★★★</b> (body only)
<b>2</b>		<b>Canon EOS 700D</b> Look, it's a new Canon at No2. No, wait, it's the old one. Actually, it's kind of both. The 700D is a minor upgrade over the 650D, keeping its 18MP sensor, flip-out touchscreen and autofocus during video and adding little beyond a new kit lens. Still great, though.	<b>\$799</b> (body only) ★★★★★ <b>BEST FOR ALL-ROUND VALUE</b>
<b>3</b>		<b>Sony A6000</b> Sony's new system camera may be tiny but it packs a big photographic punch. There may be no optical image stabilisation but the incredible speed and accuracy of the A6000's autofocus is a real highlight, as is its large, clear electronic viewfinder.	<b>\$1099</b> (body only) ★★★★★
<b>NEW</b> <b>4</b>		<b>Nikon D810</b> The top-end Nikon D810 is a monster camera. Its image quality and performance are hard to fault – if you're a serious photographer willing to stump up the cash then it's a fantastic buy. However, there are some features missing, such as 4K video and Wi-Fi.	<b>\$4888</b> (body only) ★★★★★
<b>5</b>		<b>Sony A7R</b> We love this camera. It's light weight but tough and delivers results that outstrip pretty much any other compact system camera on the market. It has a huge full-frame 36.4MP sensor and noise-suppression. Your wallet might weep, but your photo album will sing.	<b>\$2799</b> (body only) ★★★★★ <b>BEST FOR SHOOTING LIKE THE PROS</b>
<b>6</b>		<b>Canon EOS 70D</b> The 70D is Canon's best camera in years. It's the first 'proper' DSLR to nail autofocus in videos and Live View, offers a multitude of manual controls and can take stunning pics in almost any situation. Amateurs who've outgrown the entry level should look no further.	<b>\$1499</b> (body only) ★★★★★
<b>7</b>		<b>Panasonic Lumix GH4</b> Its 4K recording might grab the headlines, but the GH4 is more than that – it's Panasonic's finest all-round camera yet. Build quality is superb, autofocus is fast and accurate, image quality is great and video is even better.	<b>US\$1698 (\$2165)</b> (body only) ★★★★★ <b>BEST FOR HI-RES VIDEO</b>
<b>8</b>		<b>Fujifilm X-T1</b> There's lots to love about this snapper, from its clever viewfinder and lightning-speed focus to the weatherproof body. One for the analogue lovers, it has actual buttons and dials with no touchscreen. The lack of in-cam image stabilisation is our only complaint.	<b>\$1999</b> (body only) ★★★★★
<b>9</b>		<b>Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX7</b> The 16MP Panasonic is a versatile beast that, while not being much of a looker, has added tricks such as a tilting EVF and a handy touchscreen LCD. It's great for smooth hi-def video recording and, with the bijou 20mm f/1.7 lens, is a great travel companion.	<b>\$1649</b> (w/20mm kit) ★★★★★
<b>10</b>		<b>Pentax K-3</b> With a 24MP APS-C sensor, advanced autofocus system, snappy burst shooting and clever anti-aliasing simulator, the K-3 is a stills snapper <i>par excellence</i> . A weatherproof body and in-camera stabilisation are welcome too, but it's not quite so hot with video.	<b>US\$895 (\$1140)</b> (body only) ★★★★★

## DELECTABLE TREATS

### FEATURE OF THE MONTH

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#### A-Roy Thai #04-06

If you want authentic Thai cooking, come out to A-Roy. This casual restaurant serves a wide selection of Thai food, from starters to main courses to deserts. Signature dishes include lemongrass chicken and tom yum soup.

#### PastaMania #01-08/09

PastaMania is a 52-unit (and growing) chain of corporate and franchisee-owned restaurants. The brand seeks to bring great tasting Italian cuisine to the world at everyday prices. To date, we have served over 20 million plates of pasta and is Singapore's largest and quickest growing chains of casual dining restaurants.



<div>HOT BUY</div> <div>1</div>		<h3>Amazon Kindle Paperwhite</h3> <p>There's a new Paperwhite out on the streets of the world, and it's brighter, whiter, faster and no more expensive. Contrast is improved, making your text blacker and the background less grey, while a claimed 25% faster processor goes largely unnoticed because it was always the fastest of the e-readers. A handy new Page Flip feature lets you keep your current page while flicking through the chapter in a pop-up window: finish the chapter, or go to sleep now?</p>	<div>STUFF SAYS</div> <p>The best screen, the best ebook store and a light that could change reading habits – Kindle's still on top</p> <p>US\$199 (\$255)</p> <p>★★★★★</p>
<div>NEW</div> <div>2</div>		<h3>DJI Phantom 2 Vision</h3> <p>Want to recreate those <i>Apocalypse Now</i> sequences at your local lido? This quadcopter offers great filming potential thanks to its 14MP/1080p HD camera and videolink, built-in GPS and ability to beam images to your smartphone from 300m away.</p>	<p>US\$1199 (\$1530)</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <div>BEST FOR HIGH FLYING FILMERS</div>
<div>3</div>		<h3>3Doodler</h3> <p>Essentially a 3D printer nozzle in a pen, sticks of plastic are fed through like a glue gun and extruded at 200°C into thin air, where it immediately cools and solidifies, letting you 'draw' 3D structures. Amazing, and we've only burnt ourselves once. Maybe twice.</p>	<p>US\$100 (\$130)</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <div>BEST FOR 3D SPACE CREATIVES</div>
<div>4</div>		<h3>Korg Volca Beats</h3> <p>This Roland TR-808-aping drum machine uses analogue and digital beats to amazing effect given the bargain price, offering a studio's worth of wizardry in a tablet-sized package. If this doesn't get the nation's youth making amazing music, nothing will.</p>	<p>\$144</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <div>BEST FOR ANALOGUE MAESTROS</div>
<div>5</div>		<h3>Sennheiser X 320</h3> <p>These gaming cans – with a noise-cancelling mic, bass boost and controls for in-game and voice channels – are aimed at Xbox 360 users. Not of the Xbox persuasion? Look out for the U 320s, which will play nicely with your PS3, PC and Mac.</p>	<p>\$159</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <div>BEST FOR GAMEWORLD IMMERSION</div>
<div>6</div>		<h3>Smart ebike</h3> <p>This electric bike may be heavy and expensive, but its futuristic design, 250W motor and range of up to 100 km make it ideal for the daily commute. And don't get hung up over the price anyway – petrol and car insurance for a year would cost you way more.</p>	<p>£2500 (\$5307)</p> <p>★★★★★</p> <div>BEST FOR POWERED-UP PEDALLING</div>
<div>7</div>		<h3>Leap Motion</h3> <p>Huge Kickstarter funding and promises of <i>Minority Report</i>-style PC input have come to this: a silent, KitKat-sized block of tech. It is very accurate, and the taster games are a blast, but it'll need more consistency between apps to become truly useful.</p>	<p>\$150</p> <p>★★★★☆</p> <div>BEST FOR ALT-CTRL FREAKS</div>
<div>8</div>		<h3>Moga Ace Power</h3> <p>This click-on controller adds two analogue sticks, a D-pad, and all the usual buttons to an iPhone 5/5c/5s or 5th-gen iPod Touch. It's not brilliantly built and only works with selected games, but dedicated iOS gamers will swiftly get their money's worth.</p>	<p>US\$100 (\$130)</p> <p>★★★★☆</p> <div>BEST FOR GAMING ADDICTS</div>
<div>9</div>		<h3>BMW i3</h3> <p>Finally, an electric car which doesn't feel like a compromise. Far from it – the i3 is in many ways the ultimate urban runabout, thanks to its superb handling, astounding acceleration and great fuel economy. It's packed with gadgets, too. Only its price rankles.</p>	<p>\$236,800</p> <p>★★★★☆</p> <div>BEST FOR ELECTRIC ROAD-WARRIORS</div>
<div>10</div>		<h3>Up! Plus</h3> <p>Not since the early days of video encoding has a <i>Stuff</i> test caused such emotional rollercoastering. The Up! is the least frustrating – and least commercial – of the 3D printers we've tried. The Plus 2 (\$2899) adds a helpful auto-levelling build platform.</p>	<p>\$2599</p> <p>★★★★☆</p> <div>BEST FOR EARLY ADOPTERS</div>

# FREE PARKING AFTER 6PM (SUN - THU)








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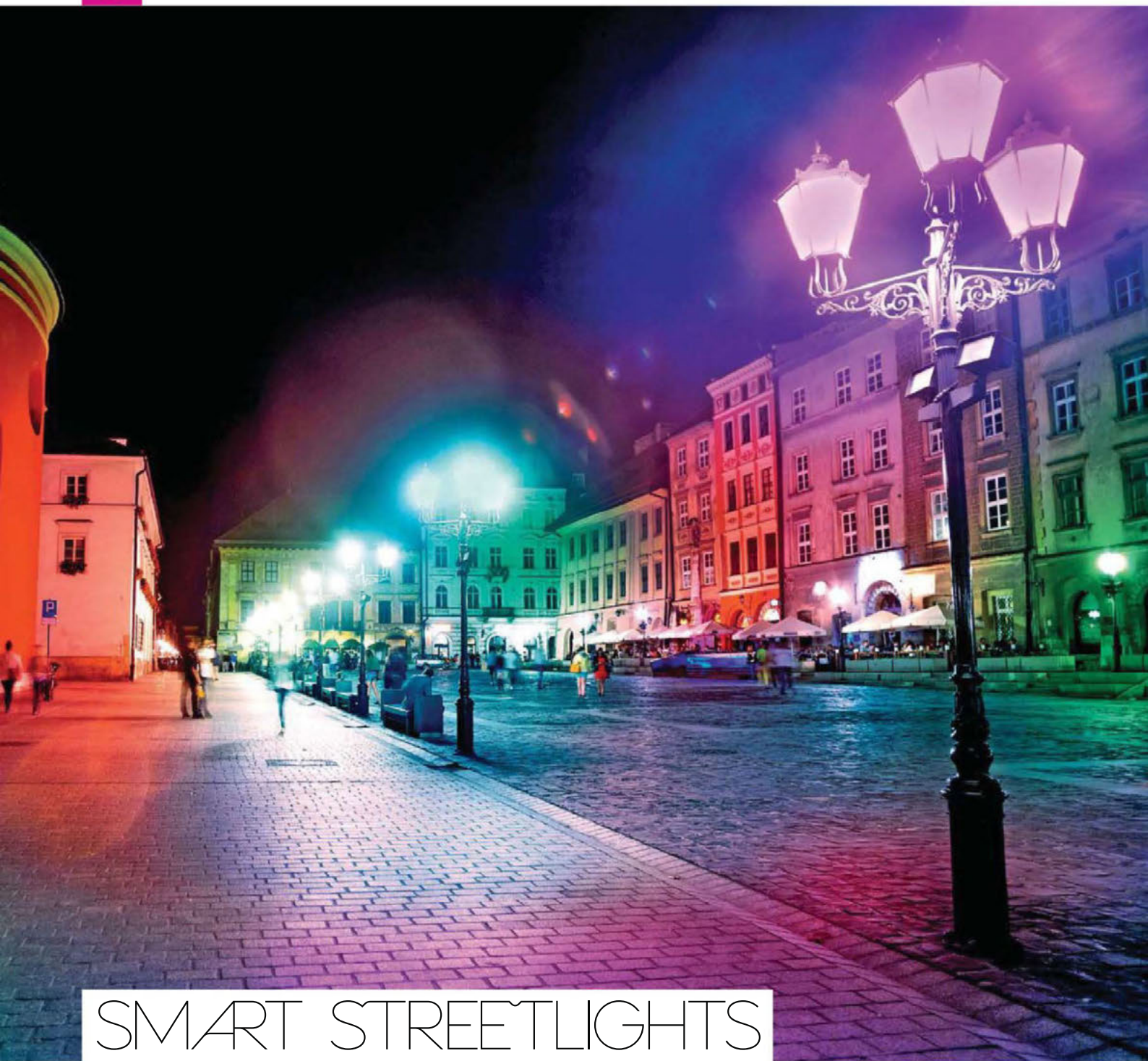
<div><div>HOT BUY</div><div>1</div></div>		<div><div>Pebble Steel</div><div>Unveiled at CES 2014, the Steel keeps the straightforward looks, crisp display and five-day battery life that helped the standard Pebble win our hearts. But it holds more RAM, apps and customisable faces this time, and swaps the plastic for either a 'Steel' silver or matte black stylish suit, making it look and feel more like an actual watch. The Steel goes beyond the gimmicks and into the world of real-world wearable tech. Pop it on your wristwear wish-list.</div></div>	<div><div>STUFF SAYS</div><div>The best smartwatch money can buy... and the original plastic Pebble is still available for US\$99 (\$125) less</div><div>US\$249 (\$320)</div><div>★★★★★</div></div>	
2		<div><div>Fitbit Flex</div><div>The Flex delivers all of Fitbit's activity-tracking smarts but in a form factor that's less fiddly than its belt-clip counterparts. It's packed with Bluetooth, NFC, vibratamotor and a display. America already has the new Force band, with a proper display. Here soon.</div></div>	<div><div>\$129</div><div>★★★★★</div></div> <div><div>BEST FOR</div><div>TRACKING</div><div>YOUR LIFE</div></div>	
3		<div><div>Jawbone UP24</div><div>Now with Bluetooth for hassle-free syncing, the stylish UP24 is worth the extra £25 over the Jawbone Up. The app introduces new challenges and tracks your sleep patterns. It will also gently nudge you, if you're lazing around, to get back on the move.</div></div>	<div><div>\$249</div><div>★★★★★</div></div>	
4		<div><div>Motorola Moto 360</div><div>With its iconic, head-turning design, this could be the first wearable you will want to wear. The Moto 360's our favourite and most comfortable Android Wear watch so far, but the battery might make you anxious and it's a few specs short of brilliance.</div></div>	<div><div>US\$250 (\$320)</div><div>★★★★☆</div></div>	
5		<div><div>Samsung Gear Live</div><div>Could it be fourth time lucky for Android Wear? A waterproof 1.63in Super AMOLED screen, a resting heart monitor and a growing selection of apps say yes. Overall, the Samsung just pips the LG G Watch. Its pitiful one-day battery life lets it down, though.</div></div>	<div><div>US\$200 (\$255)</div><div>★★★★☆</div></div>	
6		<div><div>LG G Watch</div><div>Smart, subtle and more comfortable to wear than the Samsung Gear Live above, the LG gets a lot more right than it does wrong. Its voice commands are useful and it comes with a charging cradle...but it doesn't show off Android Wear's full potential.</div></div>	<div><div>\$268</div><div>★★★★☆</div></div>	
7		<div><div>Garmin Forerunner 620</div><div>Garmin's wealth of experience in wrist-mounted GPS shines through, offering up a cacophony of stats, including vertical oscillation (how much you jiggle while running) thanks to the smart heart-rate belt. Could be cheaper and more user-friendly, though.</div></div>	<div><div>US\$450 (\$575)</div><div>★★★★☆</div></div>	
8		<div><div>TomTom Multi-Sport Cardio</div><div>The new version of the TomTom Multi-Sport adds an impressively accurate heart-rate sensor to an already strong formula, allowing for more focused and personal training. It'll track runs, cycles and swims, and the companion app is also much improved.</div></div>	<div><div>\$499</div><div>★★★★☆</div></div>	<div><div>BEST FOR</div><div>TRIATHLETES</div><div>IN TRAINING</div></div>
9		<div><div>Samsung Gear 2 Neo</div><div>It's the 'budget' plastic version of Samsung's Gear 2, but does 99% of what the more expensive device can do, although it does not have a camera. Only compatible with certain phones, it is the Gear we'd be most likely to buy, but it's far from essential.</div></div>	<div><div>\$298</div><div>★★★★☆</div></div>	
10		<div><div>Martian Notifier</div><div>The Notifier does one job very well – alerts – and you won't be ashamed to wear one in public. It doesn't shake off smartwatches' dorky image but does blend a regular-looking watch design with smartphone smarts in an affordable, comfortable, reliable package.</div></div>	<div><div>\$199</div><div>★★★★☆</div></div>	

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 with 5,000STAR\$\*

## SMART STREETLIGHTS

**S**

**mart like brains, like Prof Cox? Or smart like dandy, like Chris Eubank?**

Well, a little of the latter but a lot of the former. Cities are getting clever, with transport infrastructure in particular becoming less disjointed. Planes, trains, boats, buses and tubes all know each other's whereabouts and issues, and soon even cars will begin to talk to each other about the traffic. "Which way did you come?" they'll ask each other, sucking air through their grilles and saying: "Ooh, I wouldn't have gone on the North Circular at this time." Fortunately, we won't be listening. Or driving.

**What are we going to be doing?**

Playing *Forza Horizon Global Unlimited* on the big screen in the back, hopefully. So long as government bureaucracy hasn't insisted we have to be holding on to the steering wheels of our self-driving cars. Anyway, transport is getting smart but you know what the weak link is? Humans. We totter and jaywalk, get drunk and start fights, and generally mess with the program. Enter Philips, which thinks an extension of its colour-changing Hue lighting might be just the thing for a little high-tech crowd control.

**You can't shepherd humans with pretty lights.**

Well, that's what Philips is going to find out. It's installed a smart lighting system in a single test street in Eindhoven, the Dutch city where it was founded – a street lined with bars and clubs. Sound sensors and cameras will monitor the crowds and the moody lighting will be ramped up to a harsh white glare where rowdy or vulnerable people are. This should not only dissuade brawlers, but also assist police and medical staff. It's an intriguing concept and, if it works, another jigsaw piece in the intelligent interconnectedness of our future sprawls.

[Words: Fraser Macdonald]

## DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE! ON SALE 17 DEC





## THE NEW MOMENTUM IN-EAR

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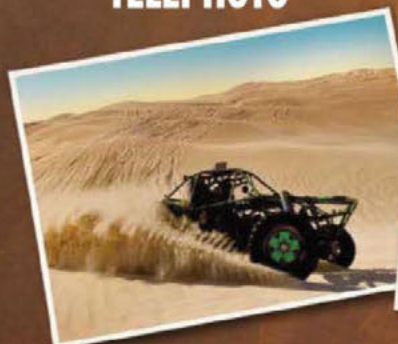
PowerShot SX60 HS

PowerShot  
SX60 HS  
Features

1365 mm  
TELEPHOTO

21 mm  
WIDE ANGLE

0 cm  
MACRO



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PowerShot SX520 HS

42x  
Optical Zoom  
• 16 MP  
• DIGIC 4+



PowerShot SX400 IS

30x  
Optical Zoom  
• 16 MP  
• DIGIC 4+



PowerShot SX700 HS

30x  
Optical Zoom  
• 16.1 MP  
• DIGIC 6



PowerShot SX600 HS

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Optical Zoom  
• 16 MP  
• DIGIC 4+



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\*As of August 17, 2014. For compact digital cameras (Canon Survey).